

THE INTEGRATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND LITURGICAL
ASPECTS OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM
IN A CONTEMPORARY LUTHERAN PARISH

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE

The doctrine of the Sacrament of Baptism has been at the center of Lutheran theology since its beginning. Over the years the sacrament has lost much of its power and meaning for the Lutheran Church. A majority of the laity and clergy of the Lutheran Church have little knowledge of the history and theology of this sacrament. The rites used to celebrate this event have little knowledge of the history and theology of this sacrament. The rites used to celebrate this event have become dull and led to very little involvement by the worshipping community,

In the last ten years there has been a resurgence of study on the theology of baptism, and worship committees have begun to reformulate the baptismal service to make it more meaningful for all who participate.

First the congregation felt it important to help educate the parents/sponsors of all about to be baptized. This education would also be used to educate the local congregation.

Second, the congregation wanted to make the baptismal rite more meaningful to all who are involved.

The purpose of this paper is to report on this project of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, La Puente, California; which was to integrate the educational and liturgical aspects of the Sacrament of Baptism in the life of a contemporary Lutheran parish.

METHOD

The needs for education and new liturgies were discovered

from a questionnaire given the congregation at the beginning of the project.

First the method used to improve the educational level of the church on the Sacrament of Baptism will be discussed. The tool used to do this was a three-part information and discussion booklet. This could be used with the parents/sponsors before the baptism of a person. This could also be used as a text for an adult education class of the local congregation. There is a Teacher's Guide which gives the background material and information that would help the teacher lead the class. There is also a Learner's Guide which helps the learner deal with the issues of history, theology, Scripture, and practical applications of the Sacrament of Baptism. This three part educational tool was used by a pilot adult education class at the church. This three-part tool has also been used with parents/sponsors of children about to be baptized. As there is no policy of the church to make these mandatory, as of yet, they are offered as extra reading material.

Second will be the method used to make the worship life centering around this Sacrament more meaningful to all.

The first event was the use during each baptism at the church of a contemporary service of Holy Baptism prepared by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship. This congregation has made use of this liturgy and found it to be most helpful and meaningful in making the service of baptism relevant to those around the font, and those in the pew.

The second event was the creation of a liturgy by the pastor and worship committee that centered around a yearly celebration of

everyone's baptism. It dealt with the symbolism of baptism, and an educational sermon on baptism. It is a yearly service of recommitment to one's baptismal covenant with God.

The third worship event was again written by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship dealing with the Affirmation of One's Baptismal Covenant. This is a service that is used instead of re-baptism. This service is evaluated and set along side the contemporary service of the Episcopal Church dealing with the same event.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of this project the local congregation has grown in its understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism, and has experienced a renewal of vitality and meaning in the liturgies of baptism.

Chapter I

PURPOSE, GOALS, AND LIMITATIONS OF PROJECT

The theology of the Lutheran Church focuses on the centrality and richness of the Sacrament of Baptism. In recent times both the richness of the sacrament's rites and the centrality of the theology has declined for the laity and the clergy of the Lutheran Church. This project is an attempt, through the educational process of the church and through its baptismal liturgies, to make the Sacrament of Baptism again a central part of the church's life, and the rites of Baptism meaningful expressions of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This project is done as a cooperative venture between the Pastor and the laypeople of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in La Puente, California. The attempt to educate the parents and sponsors of a person to be baptized is made by the use of three studies on baptism, before the rite of baptism is administered. This same group of three studies can also be used as a general adult education class for the baptized church. The attempt to make the baptism liturgies more meaningful consists of participating in three possible worship experiences. The first is a contemporary baptismal service, the second is a yearly baptismal anniversary celebration, and the third is an affirmation of one's baptismal covenant. The congregation's role will be seen through their participation in the worship and educational opportunities and their evaluation of them. The congregation's role will also be seen through their responses to a questionnaire given to them to see where they were in their relationship to their own baptismal covenant. The contemporary theological perspective on baptism will be

found within the historical and theological traditions of the Christian Church and the Lutheran Church.

The Pastor and Congregation are committed to the Lutheran Confessions and therefore will deal with the subject of baptism in the tradition of the Lutheran Church, rather than take a wider ecumenical approach. The question of infant baptism versus adult baptism will not be a major theme of this paper, but it will be alluded to within the paper. This project will make use of the history and theology of baptism, but it will be weighted in the direction of actions already done and practical application for the local parish.

Chapter II

EVALUATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

One of the ways to increase an appreciation for baptism and what it can mean in the life of the church is to renew the rites of baptism and make them alive and meaningful. Another way to increase the appreciation of baptism as the foundation of our Christian life is to provide the people of the congregation with an educational program. In the usual case now, a simple phone call from the parents will set up a baptism. If baptism is going to have its full impact on the church, the parents and sponsors of each baptized person will have to be educated as to what baptism means and can mean in daily living. The other area of education will have to be the entire congregation itself. If we accept the idea that the entire church is responsible for every baptized person, then that church should be well aware of what baptism is and what it can mean for the family of God. Baptism is a misunderstood sacrament. Merton Strommen makes this statement: "Those doctrines about which Lutherans are most inconsistent are the return of Jesus, contemporary miraculous intervention by God, and baptism."¹ The Lutheran church has always educated its people well on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and given importance to preparation to receive this sacrament. However, it is not as true when it comes to the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. There is little, if any, preparation for the event in most churches, and education programs of the

¹Merton Strommen, A Study of Generations (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972), p. 111.

church do not spend much time on baptism. The church in general, and the parents/sponsors in particular, are in need of baptismal education.

In preparation for this project, a baptismal questionnaire was given to the congregation on April 27, 1975, at a worship service of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in La Puente, California. The complete questionnaire and results are to be found in Appendix A. Following are some basic assumptions that were formed because of the questionnaire and were instrumental in the shaping of this project. The results of the questionnaire were categorized by three age-levels: 0 - 18 years, 19 - 34 years, and 35 - 99 years.

The first section of the questionnaire dealt with MY BAPTISM. As expected 100% knew their date of birth, and 32 people of the 89 questioned knew their full baptism date of rebirth. A majority of those questioned knew what church they were baptized in and who their sponsors were. Only 3 people questioned ever celebrated the anniversary of their baptism. The basic contact with their baptismal sponsors was in receiving cards, while very few (12) sponsors were present at the confirmation day of the baptized. Fifteen of the eighty-nine were baptized as adults, but the average time of pre-baptism education was only 6 weeks. This section, MY BAPTISM, seems to suggest that baptism is not central in the daily lives of the people; and that preparatory education, in the case of adult baptism, was most limited.

The second section of the questionnaire dealt with EDUCATION. A great majority of those baptized attended some religious education in the early years of their lives. Those who were old enough attended confirmation education, usually two years in length, during the 7-8th

grades. A surprising number in the 35 - 99 year-old category did not attend a confirmation program. Also in that category less than half attended any education in the church while in high school. Over half the adults who answered the questionnaire have attended some form of adult education. As infant baptism is a vital part of the Lutheran Church's theology on baptism, it becomes necessary that education follow the baptism of young people. The purpose of this part of the questionnaire was to check out and see if the people had been involved in education following their baptism.

The third section of the questionnaire deals with SPONSORSHIP OF OTHERS. Around half of the adults were sponsors of some baptized person. One person even sponsored 5 baptized people. However, the way they kept in contact with their baptized person was through cards and presents, and very few attended the confirmation rite of the person. The great majority of sponsors felt their responsibility as sponsor never ended, even though the rite of baptism indicates they have fulfilled their role when the baptized person is confirmed. I assume they felt they were always called to support and encourage the baptized, and this is good. In ranking importance of their responsibilities the 35 - 99 age group saw "education of baptized" first, then "pray for baptized", then "witness to the baptism", then "help celebrate the baptized life". The 19 - 34 ranked them: first to "pray for baptized", second "to educate", third to "help celebrate", and fourth "to witness". The 0 - 18 group ranked: first "to celebrate", second "to pray for", third "to witness", and fourth "to educate". The rankings almost reversed as they went through the age categories.

The fourth section of the questionnaire dealt with their knowledge of the THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM. The vast majority knew the common earthly element of water was used, but it was surprising 10 people did not know. The opposite is true when it comes to knowledge of the Biblical Word of baptism, Matthew 28: for only 19 of 89 knew the correct scripture. On the question of the most valid mode of baptism, over half felt that any of the three methods, (sprinkling, pouring, immersion) was valid, and 31/89 felt sprinkling is most valid. On the question of what relationships are established by baptism, (a child of God, and a member of the Christian family), 36 knew them both, 30 knew one, and 23 did not know either one. In the question of the three gifts/benefits given at baptism by God, (forgiveness of sin, power over death and devil, eternal life) 18 knew all three, 16 knew two, 16 knew one, and 39 did not know any of the three. In the question of who does the choosing in baptism, God or man, 59/89 said God chooses us. On the question of whose faith is critical to receive baptism, the majority said it was the faith of the church. On what happens to a child who dies before being baptized, only 1 felt there is a place called limbo; and 63 felt that they did not know for sure, but that God is love. A vast majority 81/89 felt that adult (believer's) baptism was no more valid than infant baptism. A greater majority 87/89 had not ever been rebaptized. Another majority of 81/89 never felt the need to be rebaptized. The majority of 84/89 would not wait until adulthood to be baptized, if they had to do it over again. All these would seem to indicate a tradition and a feeling that infant baptism was valid and meaningful for them. However, over half of the people felt a need for some kind of service to

celebrate their key spiritual moments of growth. Dealing with the question of thinking about one's baptism, 20 thought daily about it, 14 weekly, 24 once a year, and 31 didn't think about it. This would indicate a need to educate on the use of "daily baptism," and the power and meaning it holds. Two church policy questions were both split about 50 - 50. A slight majority did not feel it necessary that at least one parent should belong to the church before baptism of children. The second had a slight majority saying that if there was no emergency, there should be no private baptisms, without the presence of the church family.

A general evaluation of the questionnaire would seem to indicate that there was a great need for more education in the Sacrament of Baptism. This would be accomplished first by a more rigorous education of parents and sponsors of people to be baptized. It would also then have to be done for the members of the church, by using adult education programs to make baptism a more meaningful sacrament. I felt the questionnaire could have been done better in making the questions more specific, for I feel some people did not understand the questions, and so couldn't answer them correctly. I also caught a feeling that there was need to remind people of their baptism through worship experiences, such as a yearly anniversary celebration, and a service to help those in growth-moments celebrate, without having to be rebaptized. I was surprised at the almost unanimous feeling of no need for adult baptism, or rebaptism, for I had received a few requests for just that and felt this was a prevalent feeling among those who had been baptized as infants. This

questionnaire was helpful to me in preparing emphases for this project. It was also most helpful to the people, for it helped to show them their need for more education on the Sacrament of Baptism. They felt a real need for adult education classes in this area.

Chapter III

INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL TOOLS

As a result of the questionnaire and the needs pointed to by the answers, an education tool was created. It is a study on baptism that has three parts. This can be used by the parents/sponsors in consultation with the Pastor before the baptism of their child. It will help them focus on what baptism really is, rather than misconceptions they might have. It will also challenge them to learn more about their own baptismal covenant with God. This same study can be used in educating the congregation on baptism, through an adult education class. It uses the style of worksheets based on the theology, scriptures, and practical questions of baptism.

The education tool is in the form of three studies. There is a teacher's guide and a learner's guide for each study. The teacher's guides are meant to be used as resource material for the teacher. The teacher may add more information or omit some of the information that is given. The teacher may also use this information in any creative way that he/she might choose. The teacher's guides and learner's guides were used as presented in an initial pilot program of adult education within the church. An adult education class of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, La Puente, California, was the pilot program for this series of worksheets. They met for four weeks in the fall of 1975. They not only made use of the three worksheets as their basis for discussion but also critiqued them for future use with parents/sponsors. They were most helpful in preparing the education tools and in raising questions that were not thought of before. To

those people who were the first class, I give my thanks: Norman and Josie Slack, John and Joan Knespler, Betty Loyd, and Stephanie Troth.

The three learner's guides are reproductions of the guides used in the pilot program. The members of the class used these guides in relationship to the material found in the teacher's guides. An effort was made to create an atmosphere where questions were welcome. We spent much time dealing with individual questions raised by the questions in the learner's guides. The class answered the questions, and then time was devoted to discussion on the questions and answers. Some points in the learner's guide are statements rather than questions. This is meant to give information in a more factual way.

My first evaluation of the three guides was that they were too simple for adults of the congregation. However, in reflection after teaching the class, I concluded that the questions were not too simple at all. Many of the members of the class had little or no past education around the Sacrament of Baptism. This was very often new ground for the members of the class. I do feel that the section of the first study that dealt with the history of baptism was too complicated for these laypersons. They felt it was interesting to trace the history of baptism but the material was too long and complicated for such a short class. They also felt that would be too much for parents/sponsors to deal with prior to baptism. The next time I teach this class, I will spend more time on the history of baptism. It would probably work better to make it an entire class-period. The members of the class felt that their questions were dealt with in an orderly and informational manner. They also felt they had grown in their knowledge of what baptism was and especially

what it could mean to them and their church.

Chapter IV

BAPTISMAL EDUCATIONAL STUDY I - TEACHER'S GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

This is the first in a series of three educational tools to help the teacher to lead the learners of the class to a fuller understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism. This may be used with a class of parents and sponsors before the baptism of their child. It may also be used with a class of adult members of the church to learn more about their own baptismal covenants in which they are already living. It is not meant to be used by adults preparing for their adult baptism, although parts of these studies may be found to be useful in this adult instruction before baptism. These studies are meant to give the theology, history, and practical applications of baptism. The teacher's guide is intended to be a resource for the leader as he/she leads the class through their learner's guide. Other material may be added to this guide and not all of it need be used. It is up to the discretion of the teacher.

Welcome to the study of the Sacrament of Baptism.

WHAT IS A SACRAMENT:

There are three basic ways that God tells us that He loves us in the Lutheran Church. These are called the Means of Grace, or the ways we receive God's undeserved gifts of love. One of the Means of Grace is His Word. We can read in the scriptures, or see in pictures, or sing in hymns, or experience in nature and in relationships with

people that God does love us. Two other Means of Grace are the two sacraments used by the Lutheran Church. The two sacraments are Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

There are three elements needed to be found in an event to make it a sacrament for the Lutheran Church. The first is that it is a holy event between God and His people, commanded by Jesus Christ while he was walking upon this earth. In baptism the command is in Matthew 28:18-20, which we will look at in detail in the first of the studies. The second necessary element of a sacrament is making use of some common earthly element, such as water, as a visible sign of this relationship between God and his people. The third needful aspect of a sacrament is the belief that God does promise to give his love in a special way for us for the forgiveness of sin, life, hope and our salvation. All three of these are found in Christian baptism, and so it becomes the first of our two sacraments, gifts of love for the people of God.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF BAPTISM?

If we are to understand the full meaning of our present-day baptisms, we are called to look at the history of baptism. This will help give us reasons for some of the things we say and do about baptism, and it will help us see where we have missed some of the great aspects of baptism.

Although there was no such thing as baptism in the Old Testament, there are surely many roots of this New Testament act to be found in the Old Testament. As Eugene Brand says:

Neither Jesus nor his disciples invented Baptism. It does not spring "ex nihilo" into the New Testament Scriptures. The Old Testament reflects a variety of purification rites which involve bathing. For both male and female converts to post-exilic Judaism there was a proselyte baptism (added to circumcision for the males). Both of these water rituals have resonances in Christian Baptism, but neither is a direct antecedent.¹

Frank Gavin his his specific study of this says:

The reception of the Jewish Proselyte included a baptism: Christian Baptism indebted to this prototype, was invested with a new meaning and, in part, refashioned it, yet it has ever preserved the tokens of its original.²

As circumcision for the infant of the Jewish faith meant his initiation and beginning of the Abrahamic Covenant, so also the baptism of the child or adult into the Christian faith means his/her entrance into the church, and beginning of his/her covenant with God. Water was used in the Old Testament rites to signify the cleansing of sin, and the beginning of a new life. We can see the roots of our use of water in baptism in these concepts. We can also see the use of oil for anointing in the New Testament baptism, with the use of oil for anointing in the Old Testament.

The baptism of John the Baptist was a bridge between the Old and New Testaments. The baptism practiced by John the Baptist made use of water for a symbol of repentance, for his baptism was for repentance. He also clarified his baptism, saying there would be a different baptism of the water and the Holy Spirit, in the coming one

¹Eugene Brand, Baptism: A Pastoral Perspective, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974), p. 13.

²Frank Gavin, Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments, (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p. 114.

we identify as Jesus Christ. One great addition that John the Baptist added to Old Testament proselyte baptism was that it included Jews as well as Gentiles. The baptism of John the Baptist is important for it includes the baptism of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist baptized those who repented from their life of sin and returned to the ways of God; and yet we believe Christ did not sin or become separated from His Father and so in reality did not need this baptism. This baptism for Jesus was the beginning of his ministry. This baptism for Jesus was identifying with the "religious revival of John the Baptist". This baptism for Jesus was not because of His sin, but it was for the sin of all people. "From his water burial to his burial in Joseph's tomb, Jesus' ministry was cruciform".³ The baptism offered by John the Baptist in 30 A.D. was pivotal in our understanding of New Testament baptism.

The unique baptism of the New Testament promised by John the Baptist, which included not only water but also the Holy Spirit, began at the ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Jesus' last statement in Matthew is the baptismal command, and the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Ten days later, on Pentecost, the Spirit came in all its power. The basic sequence of baptism found in the Book of Acts is (1) proclamation of the gospel, (2) response in repentance and faith, (3) baptism, (4) receiving the Holy Spirit, (5) life in the Christian fellowship.⁴ In other writings in the New Testament the sequence was not always the same, and excep-

³Brand, p. 15.

⁴Ibid., p. 18.

tions are to be found in the Book of Acts. St. Paul is the baptismal theologian of the New Testament whose central theme is taking the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and applying it to Christian baptism. In our participation in His death we find an end to our slavery to sin, and in our participation in His resurrection we find our new life. Paul goes on to show that this gift of life is the cause for our Christian life of doing good for others. Peter, in his letters, adds the concept of being saved as Noah was saved from the flood, and that baptism is God's loving action as opposed to our achievements.⁵ Even in its first few years, the Sacrament of Baptism is seen in its relationship to Christ and His Body, the church.

The doctrine of baptism continued to grow in the next five centuries following the death of Christ. As baptism continued to grow in the life of the church there came a need for education on the sacrament and also a foundation to deal with various thoughts on baptism. It is in this early stage of the church that the creeds were used and elaborated for education and clarification. "In the late second and into the third centuries the use of infant baptism became popular."⁶ It is also in this period of time that, in the West, baptism became separated from confirmation. "Somewhere in the third and fourth centuries, we don't know how or where exactly, the Sacrament of Baptism became two distinct parts."⁷ This splitting of baptism and

⁵Ibid., pp. 18-19.

⁶Theodore Bachman, "Baptism", in The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1965), p. 181.

⁷Frank Klos, Confirmation and First Communion, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1968), p. 40.

confirmation is seen in the doctrine of baptism to be a switch in emphasis from eschatological to rather a historical view with initiation into the church being important. During these five centuries there was a great movement in baptism. Church fathers of different parts of the world continued baptism, but new emphases were found in each locale. Augustine in his involvement with the controversies over baptism, became a well known spokesman for the first time. In his emphasis on infant baptism, he came forward with these three views:

First, he distinguished between the 'reality' and the sacramentum; since God has bound us to his ordinances but has not bound himself to them, a man may conceivably receive the reality apart from the rite. ...Secondly, Augustine distinguished between having baptism and using it: a Christian at the age of responsibility must use his Baptism faithfully to receive its benefits. ...Thirdly, Baptism is used beneficially only within the true church, the divine community of love."⁸

These three emphases helped the church to expand the theology of baptism.

In the Middle Ages we see the Sacrament of Baptism defined by the Roman Catholic Church. Building on Augustine, the Roman Catholic Church developed a system of seven sacraments. A person received the grace of God through these seven sacraments in a most objective way, really apart from the thoughts or feelings of the priest or recipient of the act. Aquinas, who later came to be considered the principal theologian of the church, emphasized the Christian's spiritual responsibility, especially for the adult being baptized.

... but the Thomists taught that the Sacraments contain and confer grace, while the Franciscan school (developed by

⁸Bachman, p. 182.

Scotists and Occamists) maintained that alongside the visible rite the Holy Spirit is present with "assisting grace".⁹

This differentiation is important for the understanding of Luther's views on baptism. For Luther's theological training came from those in the Occamist tradition, rather than the Thomist. It should also be noted that somewhere between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the use of pouring water as a mode of baptism became prevalent.¹⁰

At this same time Martin Luther, a monk, began to rethink the view of the Roman Catholic Church, including the views on the Sacrament of Baptism. "Luther was not satisfied with the scholastic views of the benefits and use of Baptism, nor with the humanistic reduction of the Sacrament to a public token of faith."¹¹ In his struggle to understand the concepts of sin, grace, and forgiveness, Luther comes to grips with the Sacrament of Baptism. Luther felt the Romanist view was too mechanical and lessened the centrality of faith. The Romanist view also looked toward the person's past rather than the daily life and final consummation at the Last Day. Luther also felt that baptism made all Christians the "priesthood of believers", lay people and clergy alike. Luther also felt that baptism was the basic vow of the Christian and so the monastic vows and life could not constitute a special meritorious work of piety but could only cheapen baptism. Luther made these emphases in one of his early works, "The Holy and

⁹Ibid., pp. 182-183.

¹⁰Brand, p. 29.

¹¹Bachman, p. 182.

Blessed Sacrament of Baptism, 1519.¹² Some of Luther's statements and work on the doctrine of baptism came in his reformation of the Roman Catholic Church. Martin Luther, however, lived a double-edged polemic, for he also was protesting against the views of the Anabaptists. They held the view that infant baptism was not valid; only "believer's baptism" was valid. Luther's reactions against this side of the issue is found in his later treatise, "Rebaptism, 1528." In this discussion he reacts against the Anabaptists in various ways. Luther would say that faith is a gift of God rather than something conjured up by the person, and so the infant can participate in faith. Luther would also distinguish between the validity of baptism and the benefits of baptism; so that baptism is valid whether I received it rightly or even used it rightly, but the benefits of baptism are affected by my use of baptism. Luther's commitment to infant baptism was strengthened by this polemic. Luther would agree with the Anabaptists and encourage the life of obedience and the use of the gifts of the Spirit given at baptism.¹³ Baptism became a central doctrine of Luther and the church that followed him. He came to his view sometimes arguing with the Romanist view, and sometimes with the Anabaptist view.

In the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries there have been influences on the Lutheran view of baptism that affected it very much.

¹²Martin Luther, "The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism, 1519", in his Works (St. Louis: Concordia, 1960) XXXV, pp. 29-43.

¹³Bachman, p. 184.

Much of what we see in baptism practices today come from the influences of these three centuries. During this time period the basic two streams that influenced views of baptism were Pietism and Rationalism. Pietism influenced by Philip Spener became popular. Its central focus was the personal feeling of making a commitment to Christ and then the emphasis on living out this life in a pious lifestyle. It affected baptism, for it said that baptism was not really complete until the person made his own personal declaration of faith. The emphasis was on living out the baptismal covenant, rather than on the covenant itself. It is because of this influence that the confirmation program again became strong in the Lutheran Church and was felt by many to be more important than baptism itself.¹⁴ The other great influence on baptism in this time period was the concept of Rationalism. The Age of Reason followed by the Age of Industrial Revolution said that man could use reason to find answers to all. It was during this time of emphasis on the superiority of mind that the confirmation program of the church became more important than baptism.¹⁵ "Rationalism reduced Baptism simply to the rite of initiation into the religious community."¹⁶ It is these influences that affected the European Lutherans who immigrated to America.

It is with all this as history and background that we come to the Lutheran Church in America in the twentieth century. There have been influences on baptism in this century as well. We live in an age of secularism where Baptism has lost much, if not all, of its meaning

¹⁴Klos, p. 67.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁶Bachman, p. 185.

for people. With the emergence of a new Christian world-view, we are forced to deal with a new vocabulary and standards used by the young churches in the Third and Fourth Worlds. Biblical and Patristic studies have caused us to rethink our positions. The Karl Barth/Cullman, Jeremiah debate over the role of infant baptism has caused new discussions. The ecumenical movement says we find our common foundation in our baptism, and yet we live in our differences of baptism.¹⁷ Baptism in America in the twentieth century is a product of our past, a lively discussion of our present, and the excitement of our future.

Therefore, the Lutheran Church is involved in a rethinking of its baptismal theology and its baptismal rites. With this rethinking we are forced to deal with new and old issues of baptism. In the past we as the Lutheran Church have concentrated on the death of Christ in relationship to baptism, and have therefore missed the totality of his being including his ministry, death and resurrection. The Lutheran Church will have to continually work at its concept of faith in baptism. We are called to uphold our emphasis on prevenient grace and yet continually be open to the role of faith in baptism. The Lutheran Church will have to re-evaluate and re-theologize its reasons for infant baptism in view of modern scholarship. This means not only historical reasons but theological as well. It will deal with the issue of infants of non-church families being baptized. It will deal with accepting those not baptized as infants. Lutherans will have to again raise the concept of fellowship and community in baptism rather than indiv-

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 186-187,

idualism. Lutherans will again have to study the benefits of the modes of baptism, and recognize the worth of immersion both in symbolic language and theological language. The history of baptism is a long and meaningful one. It also promises to be an exciting one for the future of the Christian Church.

WHAT IS THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM?

The first thoughts we must deal with are those that precede baptism: what goes into baptism? The Lutheran Church focuses on God rather than people preceding baptism. What God has done and will do for us is more important than what the person has done. A sacrament is God's undeserved gift of love to us. We focus on what God has done in terms of baptism in the life and purpose of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Our baptism is an entrance into the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our baptism is into the baptism of Christ. Lorna Brockett says that, "... the real 'baptism' of Jesus is in His death,"¹⁸ However, we cannot say that only Jesus' death on the cross was his baptism. Martin Marty would say that the whole life and ministry of Jesus, beginning at his baptism in the Jordan river was part of his death. "From now on (after his Jordan baptism) he could speak of his purposes as a 'baptism' of suffering. On Golgotha, 'a general baptism of all men' would occur, which would give rise to the partic-

¹⁸Lorna Brockett, The Theology of Baptism, (Notre Dame, IN: Fides, 1971), p. 15.

ular baptism of all the people of God."¹⁹ However, it is not just the ministry and death of Christ that we participate in through our baptism. "the basic reason for water-baptism, the one on which all others depend, is this: the living Lord, crucified, and risen who is reflected in baptism, uses this rite in His free Sovereignty, for His gracious purpose toward men."²⁰ Luther puts it this way, "Baptism, then, signifies two things - death and resurrection, that is, full and complete justification."²¹ The death for our forgiveness of sins, and the life for our eternal life has already been accomplished in Jesus Christ. We cannot buy this forgiveness or life, we can only trust that it is ours by our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior, and in the gift of baptism. "Baptism is the sacrament of salvation. God acted in Christ to save us. God acts in Baptism to save us. Our salvation is by his grace; we receive it through faith."²² Therefore, all that is necessary to precede baptism has been accomplished in Jesus Christ. We accept and receive it in faith.

The second area of our concern regarding the meaning of baptism is in the act itself: the event of baptism through a rite. Baptism is water, but not simply water, for it is water comprehended in God's Word and commandment and sanctified by them. The purpose of this Water and

¹⁹Martin Marty, Baptism, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), p. 12.

²⁰Elmer Arndt, The Font and the Table, (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1967), p. 42.

²¹Martin Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, 1520", in his Works, XXXVI, p. 67.

²²Brand, p. 35.

Word is for our benefit. "to put it simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save."²³ In this event we are given new life. Sin no longer has dominion over us, we are freed from its bondage. In this event we become a part of the Christian Church - the Body of Christ. We enter into the "family of God". In this event we are given the power of the Holy Spirit. All of the Spirit is given to us at this event. We do not get part in baptism and the rest at a later time in our life. We receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit at this time. We are given the power of the Holy Spirit to cultivate and use in the rest of our lifetime. As a result of using the gifts of the Spirit, we shall see the fruits of the Spirit in our lives. Baptism is the giving of the Spirit. In baptism we become the children of God, members of His family, and are given the gifts of forgiveness of sin, power over death and the devil, and the promise of eternal life to all who believe.

The Lutheran Church allows for infant baptism. This is an issue that is up for debate in each generation, and so it is now. Without going into the full debate let these statements suffice, Luther's main argument was this:

That the baptism of infants is pleasing to Christ is sufficiently proved from his own work. God has sanctified many who have been thus baptized and has given them the Holy Spirit.²⁴

The argument for infant baptism that Oscar Cullman uses goes like this:

²³Theodore Tappert, (ed.) The Book of Concord, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 439.

²⁴Ibid., p. 442

Infant baptism is equal to the Doctrine of Baptism 1) in so far as Christ in his death and Resurrection procures for all men and independent of them a general baptism. 2) in so far as God in the entirely sovereign act of grace of Church baptism permits the person baptized, through an incorporation into the fellowship of the Body of Christ at a specific place, to take part in that once and for all saving event. 3) in so far as faith as response to this grace is decisive. 4) in so far as Baptism in its nature is the completion of circumcision and of the proselyte baptism connected with it."²⁵

Luther, dealing with the issue of faith of infants, said, "Infants are aided by the faith of others, namely, those who bring them for baptism. For the Word of God is powerful enough, when uttered, to change even a godless heart, which is no less unresponsive and helpless than any infant."²⁶ Infant baptism has arguments on both sides of not only the historical issue, but also the theological issue. Infant baptism is a risk the church takes.

Let us state openly that the church risks the Baptism of infants in the hope and trust that, as they become aware of what was done to them, and as they encounter the gospel in various ways, the response of faith will follow. The risk demands the assurance that the child will be brought up in the fellowship of believers. Where no such assurance exists, Baptism should be postponed.²⁷

This idea encourages infant baptism for the families of faith, where faith and education are reasonable assumptions. It also then encourages families where no faith is active to wait until the child is older.

The third area of baptism that is important is what follows the rite of baptism. What the church says happens in baptism certainly affects the life of the baptized. Geoffrey Wainwright gives a complete

²⁵Oscar Cullman, Baptism in the New Testament, (Chicago: Regnery, 1950), p. 70.

²⁶Luther, XXXVI, p. 73.

²⁷Brand, p. 40.

summary of additional things that happen to us in baptism, and they can be summarized in this way:

a) There is a change of ownership and allegiance, in that we are now owned by life and God and yield our allegiance to them. This is signified by the cross on the forehead in oil. b) We strip off the old man and put on the new. We are no longer children of darkness but of light. We become new people and put off the old life. This is symbolized by the new white garment. c) We have a new birth, we are reborn again as Nicodemus found out in John 3:5. This is symbolized by the font which is in the shape of the womb. d) There is an enlightenment, in which we can now see who we are as the children of God. This is symbolized by the candle lighted from the Paschal Candle. e) We are now sharers with Christ, who is our Anointed King and Priest. This is symbolized by the post-baptismal anointing with oil. f) We participate in a coronation, as the Hebrew Kings wore crowns, and the Greek victors wore wreaths, so this becomes our crowning ceremony.²⁸

Baptism is the beginning of our new life in Jesus Christ, no matter what the age of baptism. It is a time for beginnings, or new starts, or new life itself. Elmer Arndt put it this way:

Baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, signifies the new life bestowed, and a life dedicated to God's purpose of harmony: the harmony of His creation with Himself, the harmony of man with man, and harmony in the self.²⁹

Baptism is then alive and active in our lives of love to God and our fellowman. Luther talks about the responsible acts of love as a result of our baptismal covenant in terms of daily baptism. "Thus a Christian life is nothing else than a daily baptism, once begun and ever continued."³⁰ He centers his thoughts in this statement on

²⁸Geoffrey Wainwright, Christian Initiation, (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961), p. 14-15.

²⁹Arndt, p. 59.

³⁰Tappert, p. 445.

baptism, "Repentance, therefore, is nothing else than a return and approach to baptism, to resume and practice what had earlier been begun but abandoned,"³¹ Baptism is a daily event, every time we return to God in repentance, we are participating in our baptism. Therefore, there is never a need for rebaptism, for it amounts rather to an act of repentance. Baptism is serving God and our fellowman because it is the beginning point of our "priesthood of believers,"³² In our baptism we are all made priests to give, sacrifice, pray and lead in worship. In our baptism we are made priests who forgive and worship together. This is one area where the Lutheran church has to renew its efforts in understanding baptism: the daily life following baptism and all that means in responsibility and growth, in education and service.

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

This question helps us get at the idea of what is baptism and what does baptism do to us. Looking at Luther's explanation in his Small Catechism we read, "Baptism is not merely water, but it is water used according to God's command and connected with God's Word,"³³ "The benefits baptism bestows are: It effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and grants eternal salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare."³⁴ The forgiveness

³¹Ibid., p. 446.

³²Brand, p. 62.

³³Tappert, p. 348.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 348-349.

of sin is not the end of original sin. Original sin can be seen as that ability to sin with which we are all born. Baptism does not get rid of the ability to sin, but it does cleanse us from the actual sins we commit. These can be the sins of omission (failure to do what we should) and the sins of commission (doing wrong and falling short of the glory of God). We are delivered from death, not in the sense that we will never physically die, for we will. Deliverance from death means rather than in the act of baptism we died to sin and rose to life. We have already spiritually died and been raised into the Kingdom of God. We also receive power to defeat the devil for we are part of Christ's baptism, and He defeated evil in his descent into hell, and his resurrection on Easter Day. We also receive the promise of eternal life and salvation for all time, as we trust in the Word of God's love for us, and in his promise of salvation. These are gifts that God gives to us on our baptism. They become alive and useful, as we open these gifts and use them in our daily life. Today I am forgiven, today I can conquer the death and devil, and today I believe and have eternal life.

WHAT IS THE WORD OF BAPTISM?

The Word of God that is relevant to baptism is found in Matthew 28:18-20. This statement of Jesus is given as He prepares to ascend into heaven. For Matthew it is the last statement of Jesus. It is the command and promise to His church that is to be heard, believed and accomplished.

Verse 18 - And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me." Here we can deal with the

concept of authority. What gives Jesus the power to make such a statement that will follow concerning baptism? This is a power given to Christ by God himself as a result of Christ accomplishing his purpose in life, to die for the sins of mankind. Christ is given the power of the right hand of God, and therefore is to be listened to, for he speaks the truth and will of God.

Verse 19 - "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Here is where we find the Word of Baptism, that gives the water the power of rebirth. Here is where we find the formula that Matthew gives for baptism, in the name of the Triune God. The Book of Acts gives as a formula, "in the name of our Lord Jesus." The three words that are commands to us in this verse are - go, make disciples, and baptize them. The most important of these three is probably "to make disciples." Our role and job in the Christian Church is to bring the gospel to all, so that they too might become His followers. The first command given to do to those who are made disciples is to baptize. This is not a wish of Christ's, or a question, but a command. "All nations" is interpreted to mean the whole world. This includes not only the Jewish world, but the Gentile world. This includes not just the ancient world, but the modern world. This includes not just the adult world, but the child world as well. We are called to read this passage and see ourselves. We are given the command this day to go and make disciples and to give them the gift of baptism. In Jesus' time the name of someone meant everything about them. It not only told who they were, but what they were all about. There is power in the name of God, Father, Son and Spirit. It is that power of God, even found in His

name, that is the power of baptism and gives baptism its validity.

Verse 20a - " , teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." After the disciples are baptized, the second responsibility of the church is to teach them. In the case of infants the teaching about who God is comes after baptism. In the case of adults the teaching comes before baptism. We are called to teach the whole Word of God. This includes the Gospel of Jesus Christ which is the good news that all who believe in him shall have everlasting life. The summary of the law is found in many places and in this statement, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27) Even the comma following the word Spirit and before the word teaching is most important for us to notice. The comma reminds us that teaching is important in baptism. We don't just baptize people and then forget about them. The education of who God is and what his will is for our lives is most important in making baptism an alive and real event in our daily lives. The promise of parents and sponsors to bring the child up in the education of the church is a necessary point taken from this text. The more we know about God and our relationship to Him, the more our baptism becomes alive for us.

Verse 20b - "And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." Here is the promise with the command. Christ promises His people that He will always be with them and give them strength and power, that He is not a God who only meets us at our baptism and then leaves us alone. He promises the power of God is given to His people to use and enjoy. This is a promise that has no time limits on it. It is until the end of the age. It is relevant all the days of our lives,

The Word of God to us in baptism can also be seen in a similar text, which is Mark 16:15-16: "And he said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." This is Mark's understanding of the last statement of Jesus. It again gives us the similar commands to go and preach the good news. It then makes a most important and meaningful statement and promise, that all who believe and are baptized are saved. This is a statement we find in the Lutheran liturgy each Sunday. It reminds us that in our belief that Jesus Christ is our Savior, and in the relationship of baptism we are assured of our eternal salvation. The statement then says that those who do not believe in God are condemned. It does not say anything about those who are not baptized. This is a concern of many people, especially dealing with children who die and are not baptized. It brings about many emergency baptisms in hospitals, and it is a problem for the parents of the deceased child. Our immediate reaction is that God would not condemn an innocent child. First of all, we would say that the child is not innocent, it is born into a sinful world, and does indeed fall short of the glory of God. Secondly, we would say, that we cannot tell God what he must or must not do. We do not have the right to box God into our emotional feelings. God is free to do anything He wishes. Thirdly, we can say from Scripture and experience that God is love and merciful. God is just, but above even that God is merciful. We can hope that God in His love will save all children who die unbaptized; we can even personally assume that He does, but we can never legalistically dictate to God that He has to save them. This statement is for those who believe in God. It says

that for the believer the next step is baptism. For in baptism God has many blessings and gifts for us to make use of now and forever more. If Christ is our Savior, then He is our Lord. If Christ is our Lord, then we follow his commands; and one of his commands is to be baptized.

Our second study will integrate what we have now studied with the practical aspect of living out our baptismal covenant.

BAPTISM EDUCATION STUDY I - Learner's Guide

INTRODUCTION

We welcome you to this study of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. It is a great and joyous celebration of the Christian Church. It is also at the center of our entire Christian faith and life. We therefore ask that you prepare for the joyous rite of baptism and understand the basic beliefs of baptism. To help you do this, three separate studies have been prepared.

WHAT IS A SACRAMENT?

1. It is a holy event between God and His people; commanded by Christ while he was on earth.
2. It is making use of common earthly elements, like water, as a visible sign of this relationship between God and His people.
3. It is the giving of God's invisible gift of love to us in a special way for forgiveness of sin, life, hope, and our salvation.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF BAPTISM?

1. Old Testament contributions, especially of circumcision, washing, and oil.
2. Baptism of John the Baptist, including the baptism of Jesus.
3. Baptism of the New Testament Church, instituted on the Day of Pentecost.
4. Baptism of the Early Christian Church in the first five centuries,
5. Baptism of the Middle Ages, especially seen in the Roman Catholic Church.
6. Baptism of the Reformation, in the 16th century, especially the contributions of Martin Luther in response to Romanism and Anabaptists.
7. Baptism in the 17-19 centuries with emphasis on Pietism and Rationalism contributions.

8. Baptism in the 20th century in North America in the Lutheran Church.
9. Contemporary views of baptism, with future trends considered.

WHAT IS BAPTISM

1. Baptism is not water only, but it is water used together with God's Word, and by His command. (Luther's Small Catechism)
2. The benefits of baptism that God gives at baptism:
 - a. Forgiveness of sin; not the ability to sin, but the actual sins.
 - b. Deliverance from death and the power of the devil.
 - c. Gift of eternal life to all who believe what Christ has promised.

WHAT IS THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM?

1. What are the basic understandings before baptism?
2. What are the beliefs about the act of baptism, including a discussion on infant baptism?
3. What are the important factors of faith that follow the baptism?

WHAT IS THE WORD OF BAPTISM?

1. The Word of God that is relevant to baptism is found in Matthew 28:18-20.
2. This passage takes place just before Jesus ascends into heaven. It is His last command and promise to His church.
3. Verse 18 - And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me."
 - a. What does authority mean for you?
 - b. How and why does Jesus receive this power?
 - c. Taking this power into consideration, do you think Jesus has the right to make the command of baptism?
4. Verse 19 - "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,"

- a. Which three words in this verse are Christ's imperatives to us?
 - b. Which of these three is the most important command?
 - c. What is the first thing to be done to those who become disciples?
 - d. What does "all nations" mean to you?
 - e. Where do you see yourself in these commands of Christ?
 - f. Why is the "name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," so important?
5. Verse 20a - ", teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you,"
- a. What is the second thing to be done to those who become disciples?
 - b. When does this teaching take place for the disciples:
 - 1. In the case of infant baptism?
 - 2. In the case of adult baptism?
 - c. What kinds of things are the disciples to observe:
 - 1. What is the gospel or good news of Jesus Christ?
 - 2. What is the summary of the law in the Word of God?
 - d. Why is it important for us to notice a comma and not a period before the word, "teaching?"
6. Verse 20b - "And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age,"
- a. What is the promise of Christ to His people?
 - b. How long is the promise of baptism relevant for us?
7. God's promise to us can also be seen in Mark 16:15-16: And he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."
- a. What are the two commands of Christ in this passage?
 - b. Which is more important: a) belief in Jesus Christ as Savior, b) baptism?

- c. If we believe that Christ is our Lord, what should we do?
 - d. This statement is good news for those who do not believe and are baptized. It makes no statement about the unbaptized child who dies. God is love, and it is God who is the Just Judge. What do you think happens to those who die and are not baptized?
8. Any other questions that you might have on the Sacrament of Baptism?

Chapter V

BAPTISMAL EDUCATIONAL STUDY II - TEACHER'S GUIDE

Study Two in our three studies on baptism will concern itself with the relationship of baptism to our daily life and growth. This is certainly one of the key concepts of Lutheran baptism, and yet is one of the aspects we need the most help in accomplishing. It is the concept of making baptism alive to us every day of our lives.

BAPTISMAL SCRIPTURE

Another in our list of key baptismal scriptures is found in Romans 6:3-4. In this letter we get an insight into the Apostle Paul's view of baptism. In this section of his letter he is answering a question asked him, "If God comes to us in our sin with his gift of grace; why not sin all the more and receive more grace?" Paul strongly states, "By no means! How can we who have died to sin still live in it?" Then he makes the following statement on baptism that we can study verse by verse.

Verse 3 - "Do you know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" This is a most surprising answer, and yet, central to the understanding of baptism. In our baptism we enter into the life and death of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Not in the physical sense do we die, but in the spiritual sense we die at baptism. In a second the baptized die to their old way of life and are reborn into a new way of life. Our being, our spirit, our personality, ourselves have now passed through death and are given new life. In our baptismal covenant, and with our faith in Jesus Christ

as Savior, we will live forever. The "old way of life" that we die to is one of serving ourselves, the world, and the Devil. We are under the control of the sin with which we are born. We do things to preserve the self. When we are reborn in baptism, we are given a new life that has the attitude of serving God and our fellowman. It is a life that includes forgiveness, hope, and the promise of salvation. Therefore, in our baptism, we are baptized into the death of Christ. For the death of Christ brought with it the forgiveness of sin for all people, the defeat of the Devil, and the promise of everlasting life. Our baptism allows us to participate in the benefits of the death of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, on my baptism day I too become part of the life and death of Christ; not by my own doing, but by the gift of God. Then every day of my life I continue to be able to participate in this relationship with God. I can every day have total forgiveness of my sin, power over death and the devil, and the promise of eternal life to all who believe.

Verse 4 - "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life." If we die with Christ to our "old way of life," then we are also raised with Him to eternal life. The resurrection of Christ in the history of the Church has been taken to mean two things. First, the resurrection of Christ has to do with the theology of the cross and his power over the Devil. This belief sees the death of Christ and his descent into hell as a battle with evil for mankind: that Christ went into the homeground of the Devil and defeated him for all time; that Christ's resurrection is proof of the power of God over evil. The second belief on the resur-

rection is dealing with the theology of glory: that the resurrection of Christ from the dead is a gift of glory from the Father for a job well done; that the purpose of Jesus Christ was to be an obedient servant, even to death for the sins of mankind, and that Christ accomplished that in the death on the cross. As a result, God glorified Him by raising Christ from the dead. The glorification continued as Christ ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God, and will come again to judge the world. Whichever way we look at the resurrection, through the theology of the cross or of glory, we find that whoever died with Christ also is given the gift of resurrection. This happens to us on our baptism day, as we enter into the Kingdom of God, and with the gift of faith, we shall never die again in the spiritual sense. This belief not only helps me in my daily living, but it helps me in my physical dying. For I have already experienced my spiritual death, that who "I" am will go on forever, then I can find victory over my physical death.

WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN FOR DAILY LIVING?

This emphasis on daily living was a real insight into baptism by Martin Luther in his Reformation theology. As he says in his Small Catechism, when talking about the significance of baptism, "It signifies that the old Adam in us, together with all sins and evil lusts, should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance and be put to death, and that the new man should come forth daily and rise up, cleansed and righteous,

to live forever in God's presence."¹ This emphasis is not on a baptism once-long-ago, but on a daily baptism that is now and relevant in our lives. It is by daily repentance that we again and again participate in our baptismal covenant with God. Repentance is a word to describe the turning around and returning to God. The story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32, is a good example of repentance. The young man who has run away from the Father finds himself eating with the pigs. The moment he turns around from running away from the Father and begins to head home, that is the moment of repentance. Repentance occurs whenever we confess we are going away from God and His will; and when we return to Him we are again in His love and forgiveness. That is what daily baptism is all about. For each day we sin and fall short of the glory of God, and each day we are called to see our wrong direction and return to God for forgiveness and love; each day then we are participating in our baptismal covenant with God. Therefore the gift of total forgiveness, the gift of power over the death and the devil, and the gift of the promise of eternal life to all who believe, those gifts were given to me at my baptism, and are also given to me this day to use. Today I am forgiven when I confess, today I have power over death and the devil in temptations, today I am assured through my faith of the gift of eternal life, today!

We need to constantly be reminded of our baptismal covenant. The baptism certificate that is given at the time of baptism could be

¹Theodore Tappert (ed.) The Book of Concord, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 349.

displayed on the walls of our home. In a frame on the wall it is a daily reminder of who I am as a child of God; tucked away in some drawer it may be forgotten. We all know when our natural birthdate is because we celebrate it every year with a party, cake, presents, and songs. We could also be reminded of our baptism date, our rebirthdate by a yearly celebration on the anniversary of the date of our baptism. We could sing songs, have a cake, and receive presents to help us celebrate the day we became the child of God. The church gives on the baptism day a candle to each family. The purpose of this is to remind us that we are the lights of the world, just as Christ was. It is also something that we could burn on the anniversary of our baptismal day in celebration of the event. Every day we can be reminded of our baptism when we come in contact with water. We can be reminded that it was common water, along with the power of the Word of God, that made this miraculous covenant with God. As we drink water for life, we can be reminded that the water of Baptism also gave us life - now and forever. As we wash away the dirt in the shower, or in the dishpan, or off the car, we can be reminded that the water of Baptism washed away the dirt and sin from our lives. God's great gift of love is given in a public rite only once, but it becomes alive and more beautiful in our daily use of it. We should remember that all these ways of making baptism more meaningful are means to an end. The end that they all point to is the daily living out our baptismal covenant with God and in the midst of our fellowman. It isn't enough just to hang certificates and burn candles once a year. These are called to remind us to daily repent and return to God and to daily share the light of Christ with the world in which we live. It is seeing that the love relationship God had in-

stituted for us in baptism can be lived out in our loving relationships with the people with which we come in daily contact. It is in seeing that our baptism has a great deal to do with our job, our family, and our personal lives that makes living out our baptism come alive.

WHAT BAPTISM MAKES US

Baptism is the beginning of a special relationship with God. We are born to natural parents and are creatures of the Creator. All who are born into this world are creatures of the Creator and therefore are loved and cared for by God. God loves and forgives and blesses all His creation. We could then ask, why be baptized if God loves all anyway? The answer comes in the terms of the strength and meaning and depth of our relationship with God. God has spoken and said that He wants us to be not only His creatures, but His children. We can trust that God knows best for us in His infinite wisdom, and He has commanded us to be baptized into this family relationship where He is my Father, and I am His child. As my Father, God creates me, loves me, cares for me, provides for me, protects me, disciplines me, teaches me, and does all for my benefit. As His child I am called to respect Him, honor Him, trust Him, love Him and show all this by a life of obedience to His will. In this family relationship of Father/child, we find the real warmth of baptism.

The Apostle Paul talks about this warm relationship in unique terms in his letter to the Galatians, chapter 4, verses 4 - 7:

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba Father'! So through

God you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir."

It is through baptism that all people can become a part of this family relationship. It is a closer and deeper relationship as Father/child, then as Creator/creature. Paul uses the analogy of adoption to describe this event of becoming a child of God. We are born of natural parents. God in His love comes and chooses us as His children and calls us His own. In human adoption as the adoptive parents go to court to make the adoption legal, there is only one basic question, "will you make this child your legal heir?" So it is in Paul's analogy. We become sons of God, and if sons, then heirs. As we look at this analogy of baptism we can gain insights into our baptismal covenant with God. God chooses us to be his child, we do not choose Him. Just as in adoption of infants the parents choose the child and not vice versa, so it is in baptism. Also just as in adoption, later in life the child may wish to say no and run away from home, so it is in baptism, for the child may wish to say no to his/her baptism and run away from the baptismal covenant. However, as is true in both cases of adoption, the parent and God do not break the covenant, it is always open and ready to begin again. Also in this analogy we see that in baptism God gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us see that God is our Father. It is only with the power of the Holy Spirit that we can know about the relationship with God in terms of Father/child rather than merely Creator/creature. The benefit given the adopted child is that they become the legal heirs of the parents and are entitled to all the rights and privileges that go with that. So in baptism we are entitled to all that God has to offer as His heirs,

We, therefore, inherit the gifts of forgiveness, power over death and the devil, and the promise of eternal life to all who believe in Jesus Christ.

When I am baptized and God becomes my Father, and I His child, I then have a special relationship with all other baptized peoples of this earth, living and dead. If we all have the same Father, then we are brothers and sisters with all the family of God. The name of the family to which I now belong because of my baptism is the Christian Church. One is not baptized into the Lutheran Church but rather into the Christian Church of the world. As a newborn child of the family, my brothers and sisters have responsibilities towards me. Every baptized person is my sponsor at my baptism. Every baptized person is called to be responsible for me, to pray for me, to be with me in good times and in bad times, to help me with my needs. I need never be lonely again, for I am part of the Christian family. Likewise, I then become responsible for every brother and sister of mine in baptism. I am called to be with them, to help them, to pray for them, to share forgiveness with them, be concerned and love them. This is a life-long commitment between all the family of God. As Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and called God His Father, then He too becomes my brother in baptism. There is great strength and comfort in the knowledge of the fact that Christ himself is my brother, that Jesus understands me and all my feelings, and is with me in all my needs and joys. In my baptism I become part of a family with the Father of the family being God himself.

GROWING IN MY BAPTISMAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Our Father/child relationship with God begins at baptism. Unless it grows in depth as we grow in years, it will lack in the potential meaning it can have for my life. Baptism is the beginning of a lifelong relationship with God. A relationship that does not end at baptism, or confirmation or when I become a legal adult; but it is a relationship that is called to grow all of my life. Our relationship with God as our Father grows as we learn to respect Him more, love Him more, and trust Him more. We show our love to our Heavenly Father by being obedient to His will. This is the lesson His Son Jesus Christ showed us while He was upon this earth. As we grow in our obedience to His will for our lives, we grow in our love toward our Heavenly Father. As we grow in years and knowledge, we are called to grow in our knowledge and understanding of God. God is so infinite and full of truth that we will never know Him perfectly in this lifetime. The joy of the baptismal covenant is in the growing of our understanding of who God our Father is, and what He does. This again shows the great need for education in relationship with baptism. "Baptize and teach" was the command given by God to his disciples. Education is necessary for our growth as children of God. The educational opportunities are unlimited for us, both in scope and in age. As parents of a child baptized we have great opportunities to teach them about their Heavenly Father, even as they grow and learn more about their natural parents. Children's Christian education in the home is "Caught even more than taught." By the examples of the parents there is great education as to the worth of our baptismal covenant with

God. The Christian Church also provides education for the child. In our church, beginning at the age of three, there are graded classes on Sundays that will help the child learn about God and the relationship of Father/child. The Lutheran Church is now going to a special education process at the end of the fifth grade that then allows the child to participate in the Lord's Supper. Communion is the family meal, the meal of the baptized children of God, and we want the children to be able to participate as soon as it can be understood and meaningful for them. The Lutheran Church also provides an intensified time of education about God in a two-year confirmation program in the ninth and tenth grades. This time period is seen as "a pastoral and educational ministry of the church that is designed to help baptized children identify with the life and mission of the adult Christian community, and that is celebrated in a public rite."² The Church also provides educational opportunities in many areas for all adults. Adult education is encouraged all the days of our lives as we continue to grow in our relationship with God. Our Father/child relationship only becomes perfect as we die and enter into the gift of eternal life, where all mysteries shall be revealed to us.

The third study will look at the event of baptism. It will be an opportunity to learn about what is happening during the rite of baptism. It will give those participating in the event to ask any questions they might have about the service itself.

²Frank Klos, Confirmation and First Communion, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1968), p. 6.

BAPTISM EDUCATION STUDY II - Learner's Guide

BAPTISMAL SCRIPTURE - Romans 6:3-4

1. The Apostle Paul in this section of his letter is answering the question, "If God comes to us in our sin with his gift of grace; why not sin all the more, and receive more grace?" Paul answers, "By no means! How can we who have died to sin still live in it?" Then he makes this statement about baptism:
2. Verse 3 - "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"
 - a. In what sense do we die when we are baptized?
 - b. What are some descriptions of the "old way of life" before baptism?
 - c. What do you think it means to be baptized into the death of Christ?
 - d. What did Christ accomplish by his death on the cross?
 - e. How do we make that part of our life today?
3. Verse 4 - "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father, we too might walk in newness of life."
 - a. What does the resurrection of Christ have to do with his power over the Devil?
 - b. What does the resurrection of Christ have to do with the glory of eternal life?
 - c. What is the promise of those who die with Christ, in relationship to their resurrection to eternal life?
 - d. Does this promise mean that spiritually we will never die again if we remain faithful to God?
 - e. How does this help me face my physical death?

WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN FOR DAILY LIVING?

1. It means that our sinful self, with all its evil deeds and desires, should be drowned through daily repentance; and that day after day a new self should arise to live with God in righteousness and purity forever. (Luther's Small Catechism)

- a. What does "repentance" mean to you?
- b. What does the emphasis on "daily" mean to you?
- c. Does that mean the benefits of baptism, happen not only on our baptismal day, but every day of our life?
- d. What are some ways to daily remind ourselves of our baptismal covenant?
 1. Where would be the best place to keep the baptismal certificate?
 2. How could one celebrate his/her baptismal anniversary day?
 3. When could one burn his/her baptismal candle?
 4. How does our daily contact with water in drinking washing, etc., help us remind ourselves of our baptism?
2. Is then God's great gift of love at baptism for one day, or a lifetime?

WHAT BAPTISM MAKES US

1. When I am baptized there is a family relationship begun, God is my Father, and I am His child.
 - a. Does God the creator love all the creatures of his creation?
 - b. Why then does God command us to become his "children" as well?
 - c. What are some things that God my Father does for me?
 - d. What am I called to do as a child of God?
2. Galatians 4:4-7 - "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba Father!' So through God you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir."
 - a. How does God make us a part of his family of redeemed people?
 - b. In the process of adoption, who does the choosing: parents or child?

- c. In baptism the gift of the Holy Spirit is given to us to see God as who?
 - d. What is the benefit given to an adopted child?
 - e. What are some of the things we inherit from our Father?
3. When I am baptized and God becomes my Father, then I am also in relationship with every other baptized person - they are my brothers and sisters.
- a. What is the name of this "family" that I become a part of?
 - b. What responsibilities does my family have towards me?
 - c. What responsibilities do I have towards my brothers and sisters?
 - d. What relationship do I then have with Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

GROWING IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- 1. As we grow in years, we are also called to grow in our relationship with God as our Father. This goes on for our entire lifetime.
 - a. How do we show our Father that we love Him?
 - b. How can we learn more about who our Father is?
- 2. Educational opportunities:
 - a. Parental instruction in the home, both taught and caught.
 - b. Sunday education in the church beginning at the age of three.
 - c. First Communion education at the end of the fifth grade.
 - d. Two-year program of Confirmation education in the ninth and tenth grades.
 - e. Adult Educational opportunities all the years of one's life.
- 3. When does my relationship with God as my Father become perfect?
- 4. Any questions you might have on the Sacrament of Holy Baptism?

Chapter VI

BAPTISMAL EDUCATIONAL STUDY III - TEACHER'S GUIDE

Study three in our series on Baptismal education will deal with the practical issues of the baptismal rite itself. The more we know about the purpose and symbolism of the baptism rite, the more meaningful it will be for the family. Mount Calvary Lutheran Church of La Puente, California, now uses for its baptism the Provisional Contemporary Service of Holy Baptism. This service is written by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship in 1974. It is a result of the renewal of study in the area of baptism, both in its theology, and its liturgies. It is a richer celebration of baptism, not only for the baptized, but for the whole worshipping community. It is a provisional service that encourages "group baptisms" of people of all ages, young and old. It is more flexible and richer in symbols than the previous liturgy. We will go through the actual baptismal service together, seeing the purpose of baptism and the great symbolism and meaning of baptism. The service referred to is found later in this paper, it is entitled, "Contemporary Service of Holy Baptism."

THE SERVICE

There are some things we do in preparation for the actual service of baptism. During the Offering in the regular worship service, the part of the service where we receive the gifts of money, the persons to be baptized, the family, and the sponsors will meet the Pastor at the back of the church. During the Offertory Hymn, which is number two

in the front of the baptism booklet, we shall all proceed forward to the baptismal font. The sponsors will carry the containers of water to be used in the baptism. This is symbolic of the common gift of water we offer for use in the sacrament. The father of the family is encouraged to carry the child to be baptized, as in the Bible, especially the Old Testament, we get this picture of the father as the spiritual leader of the household. The other children of the family are encouraged to come forward for the baptism as well. We will all gather at the baptismal font. The font is the container which holds the water for the baptism. As baptism is seen as "entrance" into the Christian Community, it can be at the entrance of the church, or it can be up front in full view of the worshipping community. The choice is up to the family. The tradition of the local congregation has the font in front of the church.

At the beginning of the service we make a statement of what baptism is all about; it is found in the middle of page 33. In baptism we become the children of God. In baptism we are joined to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In baptism we are made members of the Christian community. In baptism we begin a life of growth in faith, love, and obedience to God's will.

The entire congregation is the sponsor of each child baptized in that church. The parents usually, although it is not necessary, choose one, two or more people to be the representatives of the congregation for this particular child. We call them sponsors, and in former times called them godparents. Sponsors are important people in baptism and the choice should be done carefully. As there are many people to choose from, these guidelines are given to aid you in your choice. As

sponsors represent the total congregation, members of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church of La Puente, California, would be possibilities. As sponsors are responsible for the education of the child, other members of the Lutheran denomination would be possibilities. As sponsors are to encourage the child in a lifelong growth, other members of the Christian Church would be possibilities. We ask you that you choose people who are concerned about baptism and will be concerned about the child's relationship with God the Father. The sponsors have a variety of roles to fulfill during the worship service. They present the child on page 33, and give the name of the child. They, along with parents, answer the questions of faith on page 34. The first question deals with the promise of the parents and sponsors to faithfully care for the child, and to help them in every way to grow in their relationship to God. The parents and sponsors then join with the entire worshipping community in their confession of faith into which the child is to be baptized. The initial question deals with renunciation of the Devil and his ways. The next three questions are the three parts of the historic Apostles' Creed. They deal with faith in God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is the faith of the parents, sponsors, and congregation that surrounds the child in baptism. They participate with the congregation in the rest of the liturgy. The key roles of the sponsors take place following the worship service. First they are called to be witnesses to the fact that the person was baptized. In case of any loss of the church's records, they can witness to the fact of baptism. This is a life-long responsibility. They will receive a certificate of appreciation from the church for being sponsors. Second, they are to pray especially for the child. We are called to pray for all in the

family of faith, but their prayers include special petitions for the baptized. This is a life-long responsibility. Third, they are called to be responsible that the child grows up in the education of the Christian Church. This is the responsibility of the sponsors whether the parents do their duty or not, whether the parents are alive or dead. This is not a legal role, so that in case of death of the parents, unless indicated in a legal will, the sponsors do not have any legal rights to the child. This responsibility for education goes on until the child makes his/her own decision, usually at confirmation. The sponsors are encouraged to be at the confirmation of the child, for in fact, their promises to God in the area of education of the child, have been fulfilled. Four, the sponsors are called to help the child celebrate the fact of his/her baptism. This can be done with letters or visits. This can be done on the anniversary of the baptismal day, and other special days of the year. This can be done whenever there is contact with the child. This is most helpful when done the entire life of the child. As one can see, the role of sponsor is most important.

The basic symbol of baptism is the common, earthly element of water. It is common tap-water used, and with the power of the Word of God, it becomes a water of washing, a water of life, and a water of regeneration. It is brought forward by the sponsors at the beginning of the baptismal liturgy. In the middle of page 35, it is poured into the font so that the witnessing community may see and hear the splashing of water. The prayer of Thanksgiving on page 35 is taken from Martin Luther's "Flood Prayer" written in 1523. It makes use of all the water imagery of the Bible in a most meaningful way. The prayer deals with the imagery of water at creation. It continues with a re-

minder of the flood and the promises to Noah. It moves on through the saving water of the Exodus and into the New Testament and the water baptism of Jesus. Water is a created gift of God. The world God created is the means by which He continues to communicate with us. The prayer for the Spirit recognizes that it is by the power of God's promise that water can be the sign of God's love to us. We might ask how can water do such great things? Martin Luther in his Small Catechism puts it this way:

It is not the water that produces these effects, but the Word of God connected with the water, and our faith which relies on the Word of God connected with the water. For without the Word of God the water is merely water and no Baptism. But when connected with the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Spirit...¹

There are three basic different ways that the water can be applied to the person. First there is the mode of sprinkling: as the Baptismal Word is proclaimed, the Pastor dips his fingers in the water and touches the head of the baptizand three times. Second is the mode of pouring: as the Baptismal Word is proclaimed, the Pastor cups his hand and pours the water over the baptizand three times. There is the mode of immersion: as the Baptismal Word is proclaimed, the Pastor assists the baptizand to go completely under the water; or in the case of an infant, up to the chin. A special baptistry is needed to hold enough water for immersion, and a time is needed to change from the white baptismal robe into dry clothing. All three of these modes have Biblical and historical background. No one way is the only right way: however, immersion does have the most symbolism of dying and rising,

¹Theodore Tappert (ed.), The Book of Concord, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 349.

of drowning to our life of sin and rising victoriously. At the present time our church makes use of the mode of pouring the water over the head.

Another symbolic act of baptism is the laying on of hands. As the Pastor lays his hands on the head of the now baptized, the historical significance is the giving of the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the prayer that is prayed while this act is being done, we are reminded the child has not only been freed from the power of sin, but that he/she has been given the full gift of the Holy Spirit, and all the power that can mean for the rest of life.

Then there comes in the liturgy a series of symbols to make baptism a meaningful event for the baptized, the family, and the gathered worshipping community. There is the sign of the cross and the anointing with oil on page 36. Saying the name of the baptized, the Pastor then makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the baptized with oil. The cross is to remind us that the baptized has been sealed by the Holy Spirit, and marked by the cross of Christ forever. The oil of thanksgiving is to remind us that as Christ was the Anointed One of God, so we too through Christ, become Anointed Ones of God, with all the blessings that that relationship can entail. Then a robe is put on the child to remind us we have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ. It reminds us of the wedding garment given to all who partake of the marriage feast in the Kingdom of God. A candle is then lighted from the Christ Candle which is next to the font. This is then given to the mother to hold. All are then reminded that we are called to let our lights shine before all peoples so that they may glorify God. This candle is also to be lighted each anniversary of the baptism in celebra-

tion of the day. Finally a certificate is given to the family with all the vital information upon it. This is suitable for framing and hanging on the wall to always remind the child that he/she has been baptized.

The record of baptism is also kept in the official records of the church.

We are baptized into the Christian Church, not any one denomination: but this church is responsible for this child's growth in the faith.

The closing of the baptismal service is also meaningful to all. There is a prayer said for the parents of the child, that they may lead the child into the ways of God, and that they may be blessed for doing so. A representative of the congregation then welcomes the baptized into the family of God. The final hymn of joy, number 6 in the baptismal booklet, is sung by the congregation as the participants return to their places.

NECESSARY INFORMATION

As the church is called to be responsible for the growth of the child, it is necessary that we know the vital information for our records. This is done for the sake of order, and also to be able to keep in contact with the child as long as possible. The following information is needed:

1. Name of parents -
2. Name of sponsors -
3. Name of child to be baptized -
4. Date of birth of child -
5. Place of birth of child -
6. Date of intended baptism -
7. Address of parents -

8. Telephone of parents -

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Creator of covenants and loving Father of your children;
we give you thanks and praise. We thank you for our baptisms. We
thank you that we can daily turn to you and again be as one with you.
We thank you for the gift of baptism that tells us you love us and
have greater things yet in store for us. We ask for your daily presence
in our lives, so that we may grow in our relationship to you and to each
other. We thank you for making us a part of a community that reminds us
we are never alone. For life, baptism, love, and hope we joyfully come
as your children, and together we pray:

Our Father, who are in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses, as
We forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and
The power, and the glory,
Forever and ever.
Amen.

BAPTISM EDUCATION STUDY III - Learner's Guide

CONTEMPORARY SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM

This service was written by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship in 1974. It is a result of the renewal of study in the area of baptism, both in its theology, and its liturgies. It is a richer celebration of baptism, not only for the baptized, but for the whole worshipping community. It is a provisional service that encourages "group baptisms" of people of all ages, young and old. It is a more flexible service and richer in symbols than the previous liturgies.

THE SERVICE

1. Preparation for the service:

- a. During the Offering in the regular Liturgy; the one to be baptized, the family, and the sponsors meet the Pastor at the back of the church.
- b. During the Offertory, sung by the congregation, they will all process to the front. The sponsors are asked to carry the containers of water, and the father is asked to carry the child.
- c. They all gather at the font. The font is the container that holds the baptismal water. It symbolizes the tomb of Christ, and the womb in which we experience rebirth. Baptism is seen as "entrance" into the Christian community, so the font may be at the entrance of the church. Baptism is seen as the entrance into the Christian "community" so the font may be in the front of the church, where the community can be a part of the service.

2. Statement of Baptism - page 33.

- a. In Baptism we become the children of God.
- b. In Baptism we are joined to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- c. In Baptism we are made members of the Christian community, the family.

- d. In Baptism we begin a life of growth in faith, love, and obedience to God's will.

3. Role of the Sponsors.

- a. Sponsors are most important in baptism, therefore their choice is important.
 - 1. As sponsors represent the total congregation, members of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church would be possibilities.
 - 2. As Sponsors are responsible for the education of the child, other members of the Lutheran denomination would be possibilities.
 - 3. As sponsors are to encourage the child in a lifelong growth, other members of the Christian Church would be possibilities.
- b. Role of sponsors in the actual service of baptism:
 - 1. They present the child on page 33. They may use his/her full name.
 - 2. They answer the questions of faith on page 34.
 - 3. They participate with the congregation in the liturgy.
- c. Responsibilities of sponsors following the rite of baptism:
 - 1. They are witnesses to the fact that the person was indeed baptized, and they will receive a certificate in appreciation that will show the vital information. The role as witness is for the life of the child.
 - 2. They are to pray for the child. We are called to pray for all in the family of faith, but they pray especially for God's blessings upon this baptized person. This is a lifelong calling for prayer.
 - 3. They are to be responsible that the child grows up in the education of the Christian Church and has opportunity to learn about his/her God and Father. This is their responsibility whether the parents do their duty or not. This is not a legal role, so in case of death of the parents; unless indicated in a legal will, they do not have any legal rights to the child. This responsibility goes on until the child makes his/her own decision, usually at the Rite of Confirmation.

4. They are to help the child celebrate the fact of his/her baptism. This can be done with visits or letters. This can be done on the anniversary of the baptism day, and other special days of the year. This can be done whenever they are in contact with the child. This can be done by attending the Confirmation Rite of the baptized. This is most helpful the entire life of the baptized.

4. The water of baptism:

- a. The water is the common and simple element used as the symbol of baptism. It is a symbol that connotes washing, cleansing, rebirth, and new life. It is brought forward and held by the sponsors. In the middle of page 35 it is poured into the font, so the congregation may see and hear the splashing of water.
- b. The prayer of Thanksgiving on page 35 is taken from Martin Luther's "Flood Prayer" written in 1523. It makes use of all the water imagery of the Bible in a most meaningful way.
- c. How can water do such great things? It is not water that does these things, but God's Word with the water and our trust in this Word. Water by itself is only water, but with the Word of God it is a life-giving water, which by grace gives the new birth through the Holy Spirit.
(Luther's Small Catechism)
- d. Modes of baptism. This is the style in which the person is baptized. All three modes have Biblical and historical background. No one way is the right way, however, immersion does have more symbolism than the other two ways.
 1. Sprinkling - As the Baptismal Word is proclaimed, the Pastor dips his fingers in the water and touches the head of the baptized three times.
 2. Pouring - As the Baptismal Word is proclaimed, the Pastor cups his hand and pours water over the baptized three times.
 3. Immersion - As the Baptismal Word is proclaimed, the Pastor assists the baptized to go completely under the water; or in the case of a child, up to the chin. Time is then needed to change from the white robe, and put on dry clothes.

5. Laying on of hands.

- a. This is the historical symbolism of the giving of the Holy Spirit.
- b. In the prayer said, while the Pastor lays both hands on the child, we are reminded that the child has not only been freed from the power of sin, but has been given the full gift of the Holy Spirit and all the power that can mean for the rest of his/her life.

6. Symbolism of baptism:

- a. Sign of the cross and anointing in oil on page 36. Saying the name of the baptized, the Pastor then makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the baptized with oil. The cross is to remind us that the baptized has been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked by the cross of Christ forever. The oil is to remind us that as Christ was the Anointed One of God, so we too through Christ, become the Anointed Ones of God, with all the blessings that that entails.
- b. A robe is put over the child to remind us that we have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ. It reminds us of the wedding garment given to all who partake of the marriage feast of the Kingdom of God.
- c. The candle is lighted from the Christ Candle, next to the font, and given to the mother to hold. We are then all reminded to let our lights shine before all peoples so that they may glorify God. This candle is also to be lighted each anniversary of the baptism in celebration of the day.
- d. A certificate is given to the family with all the vital information upon it. This is suitable for framing and hanging on the wall to always remind the child that they are baptized. The record of the baptism is also kept in the official records of the church. We are baptized into the Christian Church, not any one denomination; but this church is responsible for this child's growth in the faith.

7. Closing of the baptismal service.

- a. Prayers for the parents of the child, and the "family prayer," the Lord's Prayer, are then prayed by the congregation.
- b. A representative of the congregation then welcomes the child as a brother or sister, and member of our Christian family.

c. A hymn is sung by the congregation as the family returns to their seats.

8. Any questions you might have on the Sacrament of Holy Baptism?

NECESSARY INFORMATION

1. Name of parents -
2. Name of sponsors -
3. Name of child to be baptized -
4. Date of birth of child -
5. Place of birth of child -
6. Date of intended baptism -
7. Address of parents -
8. Telephone number of parents -

CLOSING PRAYER

Chapter VII

INTRODUCTION TO WORSHIP LITURGIES

At the same time the church educates its laity and clergy in the theology of baptism and its importance, the church must also provide richer and more meaningful worship events as the setting for baptism. In the recent history of the Lutheran Church there has been only one worship experience to help the congregation celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism. It was the rite of baptism which was inserted into the regular worship service on the days of baptism. In the more recent history of the Lutheran Churches in America, an Inter-Lutheran Commission was appointed to give the churches new and more meaningful rites surrounding the Sacrament of Baptism. What follows in this paper are two such rites written by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship. The first is a Contemporary Service of Holy Baptism. The second is a Service of Affirmation of Baptismal Vows. The third worship service was written and is used by the Pastor and congregation of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, La Puente, California. It is a yearly celebration of the church to remind itself of its baptismal relationship to God, and to recommit one's life to living out this relationship to the fullest extent.

Chapter VIII

INTER-LUTHERAN CONTEMPORARY SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM

In an attempt to see baptism again as the cornerstone of worship and ministry of the church, an Inter-Lutheran Commission of Worship was given the task to write a provisional service of Holy Baptism. It is not the last word in the renewal of the Baptismal service, but it is the latest in a long line of liturgies to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. It was one of Martin Luther's main goals of the Reformation of the sixteenth century to restore baptism to a central position in Christian theology and practice.

This contemporary worship service has its roots in the early church. The apostolic tradition of baptism was in relationship with proclamation, repentance, faith, and the life in the Spirit.¹ The celebration of baptism in the Western tradition included a period of instruction centering around the truths of the Apostles' Creed, the use of water to illustrate washing and new birth, the laying on of hands and anointing with oil as expressions of the coming of the Holy Spirit, and the celebration culminating with the Lord's Supper.² During the middle ages the use of infant baptism became prevalent. During the middle ages also in the West, the rite of baptism became separated from confirmation (laying on of hands) and First Communion.³

¹Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, Holy Baptism, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974), p. 6.

²Ibid., p. 7.

³Ibid., p. 8.

Recently in the Lutheran churches in North America First Communion has been celebrated closer to baptism, and confirmation later in one's life. In the last few years, because of a return to a study of the works of Martin Luther and because of modern biblical scholarship, there has been a renewed interest in the theology of baptism. Accompanying that interest in theology is an interest in a rich and meaningful rite of baptism. In an attempt to meet this need of the Lutheran Church, and to be a part of the total ecumenical baptismal movement, this provisional liturgy of baptism was written.

Characteristics of this provisional rite include the idea of special celebrations of baptism during the church year, rather than a hit-and-miss whenever-wished-for baptism rite that was only a small inserted part of the worship experience of the day. The new service calls for special baptism celebration days in which the service of baptism is central to the worship experience. The special days best suited for these festivals are during the Easter season, one during the Advent season, one during the Epiphany season, and one during the fall, probably on All Saint's Sunday.⁴ The hymns, liturgy, and sermon would focus on baptism on these days. Another characteristic of this new provisional service of baptism is that there are two forms for possible use. The first is a baptismal service that is part of the regular service of the Word. The second is a baptismal service that is part of service that includes the celebration of the Eucharist as well. Also this service allows for both infants and adults to be baptized in

⁴Ibid., p. 10.

the same setting and service. It is flexible enough to allow whole families to be baptized at the same time. Instruction is still important in this rite, for education takes place before baptism in the case of adults, and following in the case of infants. Both adults and infants should have people acting as their sponsors. The role of sponsors is not to act on their behalf, but to encourage and support the baptized person, whether an infant or adult. The last characteristic of this service is the mode of baptism. It allows for any of the three modes of baptism: sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. It does encourage immersion and in the rubrics gives three possible methods of immersion.

One of the great strengths of this service is that it again makes meaningful use of the symbolism of baptism. The setting, the service, and the result of the service are all expressed by a variety of symbolism. We will spend time looking at this important part of baptism. Symbolism is certainly not the main interest of baptism, but it is rather a helpful way to celebrate the theology of baptism. The symbolism of baptism can be seen in an analogy with the blueprints of a building. The building is strong and tall without the blueprints. However, the blueprints help to make it a tall and strong building. So it is with the symbolism of baptism. The symbols do not make baptism more relevant or a stronger sacrament. However, the more meaningful the symbolism surrounding baptism, the more relevant and strong baptism will be to the people. Educating the church on the meaning and use of symbolism is what makes it a vital and creative part of baptism.

The first symbol that meets us in this service of baptism is the baptismal font. The font is the enclosure, large or small, that contains the water for baptism. Location of the font is ideally expressive of two concepts: Baptism as the entrance into the church community, and baptism as entrance into the Church community.⁵ Both of these concepts are important, entrance and community; and both should be kept in mind in the architecture of the church. It is important that the worshipping community is an active part of this service, that they can see it and participate in the liturgy. It is also important symbolically to show the entrance theme. E. A. Sovik feels the best place for the font is at the entrance of the centrum, but goes on to say this, "The location of the baptismal celebration is not as important as the action that surrounds it, or as expressive."⁶ Frederic Debuyst makes this important point:

Since baptism is the sacrament of initiation . . . the most suitable place for the baptistry remains the entrance area. For my part, I would rather introduce it completely into the church. There is no reason, therefore, to give a privileged place to the initial rite of entry, and to place the baptismal font as near as possible to the porch. The act of incorporation into the community, which is the living image of the Church, is far more important, and it is this act which must be accentuated."⁷

Our church has the baptismal font on the side in the front. We move it to the center of the front during actual baptisms to emphasize the

⁵Ibid., p. 13.

⁶E. A. Sovik, Architecture for Worship, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973), p. 96.

⁷Frederic Debuyst, Modern Architecture and Christian Celebration, (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1968), p. 61.

community element. The font itself is a symbol, either of the tomb as Christ was in a tomb before the resurrection, or of the womb of motherhood symbolized in our rebirth. J. G. Davies says this:

Here indeed lies the precise reason for the adoption of the font: since in baptism the believer is buried with Christ, the font was given the form of a coffin. Numerology here provides the clue to the meaning (of the sides of the font): six refers to the death of Christ on the sixth day of the week, and eight to His resurrection."⁸

The font and its placement in the church can be helpful educational tools in making baptism theology alive for the people of God.

The water of baptism has great meaning in the celebration of the rite. Water reminds us of the creation by God, and the new creation we become in baptism. Water reminds us that creation is never abandoned by the Creator. The water of baptism in the early history of the church became a mystical element and later took on a magical flavor. The Reformation trying to overcome this magical thrust went too far the other way and deemphasized the role of water in baptism. Martin Marty has said:

The baptismal river became a pool; the pool became a well or cistern; the cistern became a barrel; the barrel became a font; the font became a birdbath; the birdbath became a bowl; the bowl became a finger bowl. If the trend continues - perhaps it is not irreverent to ask - shall we soon be experiencing the waters, the Flood, the Red Sea, the Jordan, the water of life in the minuscule antiseptis of an aerator, an atomizer, or a humidifier?"⁹

Involved in the new provisional service of baptism is a re-emphasizing

⁸J. G. Davies, Architectural Setting of Baptism, (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1962), p. 19.

⁹Martin Marty, Baptism, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), p. 16.

of the use of water. It maintains that there can be no law regarding the amount of water, that it is the Word of God that makes baptism relevant. However, options are given in the new rite. If pouring is used, then make use of the sound of splashing and get the baptized person wet. It also allows and even encourages the use of immersion. Immersion would include the possibilities of one's standing in the water, or kneeling in the water, as well as being totally submersed in the water. Immersion does give much more symbolism of both drowning to sin and rising to righteousness, and dying with Christ and rising with Him. Martin Luther said:

I would have those who are to be baptized completely immersed in water, as the Word says, and as the mystery indicates. Not because I deem this necessary, but because it would be well to give to a thing so perfect and complete a sign that is also complete and perfect."¹⁰

Water is important to the sacrament of baptism. It is encouraged in this rite of baptism to bring the water forward with the regular offering of the day and let the people witness the pouring of water into the font. This will aid in the meaningfulness of the sacrament for all concerned.

A new symbol of this service, at least new to this present generation baptismal experiences, but not new to the history of the church is the symbol of oil. Oil in the early church was used both in the service of exorcism of evil and in the blessing of thanksgiving. In the new provisional rite oil is used only in the blessing of thanksgiving. The baptized person is signed with the sign of the

¹⁰ Eugene Brand, Baptism: A Pastoral Perspective, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975), p. 104.

cross. This is to tell the person he/she is a child of God. It also reminds the baptized that whenever they sign themselves with the cross, they have been given a place in the Kingdom of God, because of their participation in the death of Christ through baptism. This sign is done with oil. In the explanation to the rite it says:

At an early time, perhaps to demonstrate physically the New Testament's description of Jesus as the Christ, God's Anointed, and also the conviction that the Christian is anointed with the Holy Spirit, the church began to anoint the baptized with oil."¹¹

This is supported by the historian, Frank Gavin, who wrote, "In the Hippolytan rite, immediately after the renunciation, follows the anointing with the 'mystic oil' (or oil of 'thanksgiving' in the Coptic)," when referring to our Jewish antecedents of the rite of baptism.¹² Oil now again becomes an important symbol of the baptismal service.

The gifts that the church gives to the baptized person can also have great symbolism and meaning. They can especially be important to continue to remind the baptized of their covenant with God. A certificate of baptism is given to each person baptized. This is meant to be displayed in the home of the baptized so that they might daily be reminded of their covenant. It is not meant to be put in some drawer for safe keeping. A Baptismal candle is given to each person. The candle is white and decorated with baptismal symbols.

¹¹Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, p. 20.

¹²Frank Gavin, Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments, (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p. 49.

It is lighted from the Paschal candle during the ceremony to symbolize that in Christ we become lights to a darkened world. The baptized is then encouraged to burn the candle on his/her baptismal anniversary each year as a way to remember that he/she is a child of God. The provisional rite also makes use of a white garment to be put on the baptized after the baptism. It is to remind us that we are new persons declared clean by the righteousness of Christ during baptism. This thought can encourage us to live an active life of love. Our church at this time does not make use of this gift of the robe; however it is in the planning stage. We will experiment with two options. The first is purchasing baptismal robes used by the Roman Catholic Church in their baptismal services. The second is having our church's Altar Committee hand-sew them, in the form of ponchos. In either case, they will be given as a gift to the child and his/her family. Gifts are important in that they will be constant reminders of the theology of baptism, not only for the baptized, but for their families as well.

Following is the actual new provisional rite prepared by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship. It is available for congregational use. Mount Calvary Lutheran Church of La Puente, California, has reproduced enough of this service for the entire congregation and now uses it for the baptisms that take place at it. We have chosen to use the form of the service that does include the Eucharist as well. The choice of this service or the traditional "Occasional Service" found in our Service Book and Hymnal is given the candidates for baptism or their families. We have found since making this choice available that everyone has chosen the newer provisional service of baptism and has found it more meaningful. The congregation has found

itself included in the event, rather than mere uninterested spectators. The families of the baptized have expressed appreciation for the gifts presented to them, for the atmosphere of joy and importance surrounding this service, and for the heightened awareness of the Presence of God. We have used this service for group festival baptisms and for individual baptisms.

HOLY BAPTISM

FOR USE WITH SERVICES OTHER THAN THE HOLY COMMUNION

A psalm or hymn is sung as the candidates, their sponsors, the parents, and the ministers go to the font.

The Greeting is said only if the liturgy of Holy Baptism begins the service.

Presiding Minister The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People And also with you.

One or more lessons are read.*

LESSON

Presiding Minister Holy Baptism is the means by which the Father creates new sons and daughters. In the waters of Baptism we are joined to the death and resurrection of our Lord. Born again by water and the Spirit, we are made members of the body of Christ. Living in fellowship with him and with his people, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.

A sponsor for each candidate in turn presents the candidate with these or similar words:

Sponsor I present _____ (Name) _____ to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

The minister addresses those candidates able to answer for themselves:

Presiding Minister _____ (Name) _____, do you desire to be baptized?

Candidate I do.

* Here the lesson functions as biblical material for the baptismal rite. The other lessons appointed for the service are read as usual.

The minister addresses the sponsors and parents.

Presiding Minister You have presented *these candidates* for Holy Baptism. Do you now promise that you will faithfully care for *them* and help *them* in every way as God gives you opportunity so *they* may bear witness to the faith we profess?

**Sponsors
(Parents)** I do.

STAND

The minister addresses the baptismal group and the whole congregation:

Presiding Minister Profess your faith in Christ Jesus. Reject sin. Confess the faith of the church, the faith in which we baptize.

Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises?

People I do.

Presiding Minister Do you believe in God the Father?

People I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

Presiding Minister Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

People I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Presiding Minister Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

People I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Presiding Minister Let us pray.

Grant to us, Lord, that all who are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ, your Son, may also live with him in the power of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People Amen.

Presiding Minister The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Presiding Minister Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Presiding Minister Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: We give you thanks, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and you created heaven and earth. By the gift of water you nourish and sustain us and all living things.

By the waters of the flood you condemned the wicked and saved those whom you had chosen, Noah and his family. You led Israel by the pillar of cloud and fire through the sea, out of slavery into the freedom of the promised land. In the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Spirit. By the baptism of his own death and resurrection, your beloved Son has set us free from bondage to sin and death and has opened the way to the joy and freedom of everlasting life. He made water a sign of the kingdom and of cleansing and rebirth. In obedience to his command, we make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Pour out your Holy Spirit, gracious Father, to make this a water of cleansing. Wash away the sins of all those who enter it, and bring them forth as inheritors of your glorious kingdom.

To you be given praise and honor and worship through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

People Amen.

The minister baptizes each of the candidates in the following manner:

Presiding Minister (Name), I baptize you | (Name) is baptized in
in the Name of the Father | the Name of the Father

The minister pours water on the candidate's head.

And of the Son | **And of the Son**

The minister pours water on the candidate's head a second time.

And of the Holy Spirit. | **And of the Holy Spirit.**
Amen. | **Amen.**

The minister pours water on the candidate's head a third time.

SIT

A psalm or hymn may be sung as the ministers, the baptized, and those with them go to a place before the altar where they can kneel.

Presiding Minister The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

The candidates kneel. Very young children are held by a parent or sponsor who remains standing. The minister lays both hands upon the head of each of the baptized in turn, saying:

Presiding Minister God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks for freeing your sons and daughters from the power of sin and for raising them up to a new life through this holy Sacrament. Pour your Holy Spirit upon them: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and power, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.

People Amen.

The minister marks the sign of the cross on the forehead of each of the baptized. Oil prepared for this purpose may be used. As the sign of the cross is made these words are said:

Presiding Minister (Name), child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

The baptized or the sponsor responds:

Amen.

They stand after all have received the sign of the cross.

A white garment may be given to each of the baptized.

Representative Put on this robe, for in Baptism you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ who calls you to his great feast.

A lighted candle may be given to the baptized or a sponsor of the very young.

Representative Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

If small children have been baptized, the following blessing may be given the parents:

Presiding Minister O God, the Giver of all life, look with kindness upon the *fathers* and *mothers* of *these children*. Let them ever rejoice in the gift you have given them. Make them teachers and examples of righteousness for their *children*. Strengthen them in their own Baptism so they may eternally share with their *children* the salvation you have given them; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

All Amen.

All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

STAND

The ministers, the baptized, and those with them turn toward the people.

Representative God has given us *these* new *brothers and sisters*. We receive *them* with love and assure *them* of our joy over *their* entrance into our fellowship.

People We welcome you into the Lord's family.
We receive you as fellow members of the body of Christ,
children of the same heavenly Father,
and heirs with us of the kingdom of God.

The ministers exchange the sign of peace with the baptized, with their parents and sponsors, and with the whole congregation saying these or similar words:

The peace of the Lord.

Response: **His peace be with you.**

The blessing is said only when the baptismal liturgy is used by itself, apart from a service which concludes with a blessing.

Presiding Minister Almighty God, Father, (✝) Son and Holy Spirit, bless you now and for ever.

People Amen.

All return to their places.

The service used for baptisms in the past recent history of the American Lutheran Churches has either been the service in The Lutheran Agenda or The Occasional Services, with our church using the latter. Both of these rites are descended from Luther's Taufbuchlein of 1526 and its predecessor in 1523. These sixteenth century Reformation rites were for infants, reflecting the situation of post-medieval Christendom.¹³ Luther's Taufbuchlein will be found as Appendix B. The new Contemporary Service still makes use of infant baptism, but includes an emphasis on adult baptism that is not found in the earlier rites. The earlier Occasional Service understands in itself that a Confirmation Rite following will be most important. The Contemporary Service does not see Confirmation in the role of finishing out Baptism, and so does not emphasize these promises so much. Sponsors in the Occasional Service were seen as people who would basically make sure the child would be brought to his/her Confirmation Day, while in the new service the sponsor's role is to support and encourage the baptized in all their life. Therefore, sponsors are even encouraged for adult baptism in the Contemporary Service. In the Occasional Service congregational involvement is minimal, at the most an "Amen" is said once in awhile. In the new Contemporary Service, the congregation is a part of the service. Their representative, one of the laity, is there to help the Pastor and even welcome the baptized into the congregation at the close of the service. The entire congregation answers the questions of baptism,

¹³Brand, p. 79.

which reminds them of their covenant of baptism but also says that the entire faith of the church is involved in that baptism. The Occasional Service does not include the possibility of family baptisms, for there is one service for infants and one for adults. The new Contemporary Service is flexible enough to encourage adult and infant baptisms together. In regards to the Occasional Service Eugene Brand makes this comment:

The language of rescue (Flood) and deliverance (Exodus) again needs to sound, as does the language of mission and family (Jordan). A more dramatic and obvious use of water is called for. The rite of baptism needs to be brought to life.¹⁴

The Contemporary Baptismal Service not only includes Luther's Flood Prayer, but incorporates its vital theology into the liturgy. The contemporary service adds new excitement and meaning to baptism mainly because of the influence of the work of other churches in the field of contemporary worship, the renewal of Luther studies, and new evidences brought about by modern Biblical scholarship. The renewed interest in community involvement, the addition of new symbolism, the new emphasis on possible immersion, and the re-evaluation of infant baptism, are all examples of the positive emphases these influences have provided in the last few years. An evaluation of this provisional contemporary baptismal service has been undertaken by the congregation of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, the worship committee and the Pastor. The congregation has found this a great help in making baptism a meaningful event for the worshipping community. In past years it was a time in the

¹⁴Ibid., p. 89.

service to put up with, to be bored, to let one's mind wander. Now the baptismal liturgy is a time for all to be involved not only with the baptism up front, but with their own baptismal covenant with God. It is a time of joy, of excitement, of seeing the Christian family grow. Mount Calvary now makes use of group baptismal festivals on Christmas Day and during the second service on Easter Day. We also use this for individual services of baptism and find it most meaningful. The worship committee also has only praise for the new provisional service. They see it as an alive event of God's presence within the community. The questionnaire given the congregation gave them an opportunity to express their evaluation of the contemporary service of baptism. The great majority favored the new service. They felt it especially more meaningful in two areas than the previously used liturgy. First, there was more of a total involvement of the congregation and that all the worshipping community were reminded of their own baptismal covenants with God. Second, that it had a more joyful feeling surrounding the rite of baptism. The mood of the music, liturgy, and symbolism, all encourage the worshipper to celebrate, not only the baptism happening before them in the service, but also each person's remembering of his/her own baptism. The Pastor appreciates the work done on this service. It is no longer something the Pastor does, but it is an event in which everyone present is a vital part. The parents are most pleased with the central attention the act receives in the worship service, and also with the meaningful gifts they receive from the congregation. Our church is still experimenting with possible additions to the service. We have now placed the baptismal liturgy following the offering in the liturgy, so that we can bring forth in

the Offering procession the gift of water to be used in the baptism. This seems to give baptism even more an important role. People just don't appear at the font, they process with the gift of water, from the congregation to the font. Realizing this as a provisional worship service, and not the last word in baptism services, it is most exciting to see the progress forward again making baptism a central place, not only among our rites, but in our theology.

For prior to Luther, the emphasis was on this once-and-for-all gift of grace at baptism, followed by other gifts of grace dispensed by the Church through the other six sacraments. Luther would agree that Baptism was a unique sacrament, but that it was also a covenant that was relevant daily in our lives.

As one looks at the Lutheran Church in North America in the twentieth century, it would again seem that we have lost the power available in daily use of one's baptismal covenant. We too have seen the initial baptismal day as important, but then fail to realize that this power is available to us on a day-by-day basis. We fail to recognize that the benefits of baptism, forgiveness of sin, power over death and the devil, and the promise of eternal life, are available to us each and every day of our lives, as we renew our relationship with God through repentance.

There are many practical things that we could do as God's people to remind ourselves of our baptismal covenant with God.

Making the sign of the cross (with its accompanying Trinitarian formula), first made upon us in Baptism, is intended to be such a reminder. If it is more than a mechanical gesture, doing this with water upon entering the church can be an even more explicit reminder of Baptism - this, in spite of all the Protestant jibes about holy water.⁴

Daily we could cross ourselves as a way to visibly remind ourselves of our covenant. Whenever we make use of water, as in washing, or drinking, or cleaning, we could remind ourselves of the washing away of sin in baptism, or the gift of life in baptism. Whenever the community of

⁴Ibid., p. 66.

baptized people gathers, we could make use of the Apostles' Creed, the baptismal creed of the church. This would remind us of our "family" relationship begun at baptism with all those baptized children of God.

In our church the worship committee wrestled with this concept of making daily baptism alive and real to our people. One of the results of this discussion was the idea to have the church at least once a year celebrate its baptismal covenant in a worship service that specifically reminded them of baptism and the power that it has for every day. Following is the result of this plan. It is a worship service that was celebrated on Trinity Sunday, May 25, 1975, at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in La Puente, California. It was divided into three parts: a time to remember, a time to celebrate, and a time to recommit.

A TIME TO REMEMBER

Opening Hymn was "The Church's One Foundation" written by Samuel John Stone, with its emphasis on the creation of the church on the foundation of Jesus Christ, the water, and the word. It also talks about the one faith, one birth as the charter of salvation.

Confession and Forgiveness Litany

Leader - O God, who is our Loving and Understanding Father, we come before you today as your children who have not always lived up to our family name of Christian.

Congregation - Father, forgive us.

Leader - In Baptism you made us truly human by becoming part of us, and yet we do not always live as completed human beings.

Congregation - Father, forgive us.

Leader - In Baptism you gave us the gift of daily forgiveness, and yet many days we forget to say we are sorry.

Congregation - Father forgive us.

Leader - In Baptism you promised your adopted children the great inheritance of eternal life, and yet many times we are not sure that we believe you and your promises.

Congregation - Father, forgive us.

Leader - In Baptism you filled us with your spirit, and yet we have only allowed a small portion of that power to affect our daily lives.

Congregation - Father, forgive us.

Leader - In Baptism you promised power over death and the devil, and yet we allow the devil to win many of our temptations!

Congregation - Father, forgive us.

Leader - Yet, in all these times when your children have gone their own way, the times we have not shown love to our baptismal family, and the times we have run away from You as our Father, You have never given up on us, You have never stopped loving us, and You never have withheld Your forgiveness.

Congregation - Father, we thank You, for You are the greatest God!

Luther's Baptism Prayer - "The Flood Prayer"⁵

⁵Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, Holy Baptism, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974), p. 3.

Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: We give you thanks, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and You created heaven and earth. By the gift of water you nourish and sustain us and all living things.

By the waters of the flood you condemned the wicked and saved those whom you had chosen, Noah and his family. You led Israel by the pillars of cloud and fire through the sea, out of slavery into the freedom of the promised land. In the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Spirit. By the baptism of his own death and resurrection, your beloved Son has set us free from bondage to sin and death and has opened the way to the joy and freedom of everlasting life. He made water a sign of the kingdom and of cleansing and rebirth. In obedience to his command, we make disciples of all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Pour out your Holy Spirit, gracious Father, to make this a water of cleansing. Wash away the sins of all those who enter it, and bring them forth as inheritors of your glorious kingdom. To you be given praise and honor and worship through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Children's Sermon - "The Baptismal Font is Home, Safe Home"

with the emphasis being on the idea that even if we leave the baptismal covenant and run away from God our Father, we can always come home and be with Him because of our baptismal covenant that God does not break.

Lessons - Old Testament - Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40.

Epistle Lesson - Romans 8:14-17.

Gradual - Instead of singing the threefold "Alleluia" we sang the same music, but the words were, "I am baptized, I am baptized, I am baptized."

Gospel - Matthew 28:16-20.

These were the pericope texts for Trinity Sunday, but are all baptismal texts.

A TIME TO CELEBRATE

Creedal Vows of Baptism asked at the time of baptism.⁶

Leader - Profess your faith in Christ Jesus. Reject sin.

Confess the faith of the church, the faith in which we baptize.

Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises.

Congregation - I do.

Leader - Do you believe in God the Father?

Congregation - I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Leader - Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

Congregation - I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

⁶Ibid., p. 25.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Leader - Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

Congregation - I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn before the Sermon - "He that Believes and is Baptized" by Thomas Hansen Kingo. This hymn was used before all baptisms in our tradition before the new Baptismal Service was used. The words are following:

"He that believes and is baptized, shall see the Lord's salvation;

Baptized into the death of Christ, He is a new creation;

Through Christ's redemption he shall stand, among the glorious heavenly band

Of every tribe and nation.

With one accord, O God, we pray, grant us thy Holy Spirit;

Look thou on our infirmity through Jesus' Blood and merit;

Grant us to grow in grace each day, by holy baptism, that we may, Eternal life inherit. Amen."

Sermon - "A Thirty Trillion, Zillion-Dollar Person." The text for the sermon was Romans 8:14-17. The first point was that God adopts us and makes us His children and heirs of His kingdom. The illustration of the facts and feelings of our own personal adoption of our two children was used. The second point was that if God is our Father, then Christ is our brother. If we suffer in death with Christ, we also glory in his resurrection. He then, as our brother, can be an example of our own living, and we can be as Luther said, "Little Christs to our neighbors." The third point is that we get great worth

in baptism, for we become inheritors of the richest Father of all times and a brother or sister of Christ. Therefore, it is good for us to remember, celebrate and recommit our lives.

Offering - As the people offered their gifts to God, they were given a small candle.

Candlelighting - The Leader lit his candle from the Baptismal Christ Paschal candle that was near the baptismal font. This fire was then passed to all worshippers with the statement, "Baptism has made us lights of Christ!"

Hymn sung as all the candles were lighted, "This is a Joyous Happy Day," by Roger Tappert. It is a contemporary baptismal hymn written in 1971.

"This is a joyous, happy day; we celebrate your gift of life.

Christ is with us, joy surrounds us. Christ takes our sin and sets us free

He fills our lives with endless life. Christ is with us, Christ unites us

Praise our Maker, praise the Spirit, praise Christ Jesus."

A TIME TO RECOMMIT

Recommitment at the Altar - The people were ushered in groups to the altar area where they knelt at the altar railing. This was for all baptized people. The Pastor made the sign of the cross on each person's forehead to remind them that they were a part of the Body of Christ, to remind them of a similar act done at their baptism. The cross was made with oil to remind them that in baptism we are chosen by Christ the Anointed One of God. The concept came from Leonel Mitchell,

In the ancient world, anointing with oil was the normal accompaniment of bathing. In Hebrew usage the priest and king were anointed with oil, which conveyed the power to exercise their function. The anointing of the priest was in the form of the Greek letter chi, that is a cross. Christ was rex unctus, the Anointed King, and Christians are likewise anointed as members of him and of his royal and priestly people.⁷

Drinking Milk and Honey - While at the altar they were then all given a small cup containing a mixture of milk and honey. As the Israelites drank the milk and honey of the Promised Land, so likewise, in baptism we enter a Kingdom of God. J. G. Davies said this concerning milk and honey symbolism:

Milk and honey, possibly symbolized by the golden cup of Kelibia, were consumed according to the early Roman rite, the Coptic, and Ethiopic rites, as well as at Alexandria, and in North Africa - they symbolized entrance into the promised land.⁸

Prayer of Recommitment - While at the altar they were then given time to pray a prayer of recommitment to their baptismal vows seeing God as their Father, and fellow people as their "family."

Singing during Recommitment Service - While the groups went up to the altar, the rest of the congregation sang this hymn, "Praise and Thanksgiving" by Harold Francis Yardley and Frank J. Whiteley, both twentieth century hymn writers.

"Praise and thanksgiving be to our Creator, source of this blessing.
Father, Mediator, baptize and make your own these who come
before you,
While we adore you.

⁷Leonel Mitchell, Baptismal Anointing, (London: SPCK, 1966), p. 172.

⁸J. G. Davies, Architectural Setting of Baptism, (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1962), p. 38.

Not our own holiness, nor that we have striven, brings us
the peace
Which you O Christ have given. Baptize and set apart;
come, O, Risen
Savior, with grace and favor.

Come Holy Spirit; come in visitation; You are the truth,
our hope and
Our salvation. Baptize with joy and power; give, O, Dove
descending,
Life never ending.

Eternal word, still by the Father spoken, Speak to us
now in this
Baptismal token; proclaim anew to us, love divine,
unceasing,
In us increasing.

Praise to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, One Lord,
one faith, one
Source of every merit. Here now renew your church,
through this symbol
Given, grand peace from heaven."

Family Prayer - The Lord's Prayer

Sharing the Peace - Sharing the peace of God, using the word
brother or sister in whatever manner was most comfortable for them, a
handshake, or hug.

Benediction - Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless
you now and forever. Amen.

Closing Hymn was "O Happy Day When We Shall Stand" by
Wilhelm Adreas Wexels. This hymn reminds us at the end of worship
that there is also a happy day awaiting all the children of God who
have heard the saving Word of God. Love is seen in terms of a flood
of water: As we await that glorious day, we live daily in His grace.

Following the worship service, during the Fellowship Hour,
we celebrated with cakes, punch and coffee. The cakes had candles to
remind us of the years our covenant with God has been active and alive.

This again was a visible way to celebrate our rebirth, by using one of the symbols of our birthday.

Evaluation of this worship service can be seen through the eyes of the worshipper, the worship committee and the Pastor.

The congregation found this to be an exciting worship service, which allowed them not only to remember that they were children of God but also to participate in symbolic and meaningful ways in their daily baptismal covenant with God. Some people remarked that it was one of the first times that they had been reminded of their baptism in a worship setting, and it gave them a time to confess their breaking of the covenant, but also to celebrate it in a new way. It helped to make them aware that indeed, baptism was a daily event to be remembered and celebrated and to recommit themselves daily to the covenant. The practical problem of the milk and honey was discussed. The taste of milk and honey was strange to many, and the people were unsure about the use of this symbol. The cross with oil was much more meaningful to the people. They voted to use this service again within the next year and hopefully make it a yearly celebration. The Pastor was pleased with the worship experience as well. It was a service that included all people, both young and old, in a visual experience of baptism. Both the emotions and intellect were alive in the experience. It was a service that was relevant and alive for the participants. It was a service of the baptized "family of God," and that is exactly what it was intended to be.

Chapter X

INTER-LUTHERAN CONTEMPORARY SERVICE OF AFFIRMATION
OF THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

We have looked at the rite of baptism and we have celebrated a recommitment to that baptism. Now we would like to deal with a service of affirmation of baptismal vows, rather than a service of rebaptism.

The problem I wish to deal with in this section is the dilemma of the local Lutheran parish pastor who has on one side the theology of Lutheran doctrine and an interpretation of Biblical texts, and on the other side the subjective feelings of his parishioners in regards to the practice of rebaptism. The solution is hopefully a symbolic and meaningful ritual act within a worship service by which the person could again affirm the baptismal vows, without being rebaptized.

I will deal with the theology of the Lutheran tradition that strongly encourages that the church does not participate in the act of rebaptizing people who have been already baptized with the Trinitarian Formula, Martin Luther in his explanation of baptism in the "Large Catechism" says it this way:

Therefore, Baptism remains forever. Even though we fall from it and sin, nevertheless we always have access to it so that we may again subdue the old man. But we need not again have the water poured over us. Even if we were immersed in water a hundred times, it would nevertheless be only one Baptism, and the effect and signification of Baptism would continue and remain. Repentance, therefore, is nothing else

than a return and approach to Baptism, to resume and practice what had earlier been begun but abandoned.¹

It is stated even stronger in the "Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will", where we read:

But if those who have been baptized act contrary to their conscience and permit sin to rule in themselves and thus grieve the Holy Spirit within them and lose him, they dare not be baptized again, though they must certainly be converted again...²

Heinrich Schmid in his book, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, which compiles the works of Lutheran theologians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, makes the following statements: "So that in repentance we can recover that which was neglected on man's part in Baptism. On this ground, also, the repetition of baptism is as unnecessary as it is inadmissible."³

Also,

Baptism, properly administered, is not to be repeated and reiterated: (1) because it is the Sacrament of initiation, for, as we are born but once, so also we are but born once again; (2) because there is no precept, no promise, no example, in Holy Scripture for such repetition; (3) because the fruit of Baptism is perpetual, and the unbelief of man does not make the faith of God of no effect.⁴

And also,

This doctrine concerning the non-repetition of Baptism, has been given, not only that we should dispute that it

¹Theodore Tappert, (ed.) The Book of Concord, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 446.77.

²Ibid., p. 534.69.

³Heinrich Schmid, Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1875), p. 538.

should not be repeated, but that the sources of consolation might be shown, so that even after a fall, when again converted, we have re-access to the covenant of peace, made and sealed unto us in our Baptism.⁵

So the local Lutheran pastor comes to his situation with a theology and history of the non-repetition of the act of baptism.

The Biblical evidence for this stance can be looked at in two ways. In the book of Ephesians 4:4-6 it is written,

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

The Lutheran Church has interpreted this to mean the necessity of only one baptism; therefore it accepts all baptisms performed with the Trinitarian Formula and does not rebaptize those coming into fellowship from other traditions or those who request to be rebaptized. There is also in scripture no evidence that the act of rebaptism took place in the Biblical times, with the exception of those baptized with the formula of John the Baptist and later baptized with the formula of Jesus Christ.

There is also the metaphor of baptism as adoption found in Romans. Adoption is done by the parents, who choose the child and then legally adopt him/her as a true child with all rights of inheritance. So it is in baptism: God the Father adopts us as His children and makes us heirs of his inheritance. Adopted small children have no real say, yes or no in choosing the parents. They have the right later in life to say no to the family relationship;

⁵Ibid., p. 554.

but legally, morally, and in the eyes of the parents they are always their children. So it can be seen in baptism. Even though children had no choice in infant baptism, even if they want to run away from the Father - child relationship later in life, they will always be the children of the Father, and therefore, will not have to be re-adopted if they should decide to come back into the relationship. Rather it becomes the story of the Prodigal Son who repents and comes home to be welcomed by the Waiting Father.

So on one side of the local parish pastor is the systematic theology and history of the church which does not allow for re-baptism. On the other side is the pastoral theology which must relate to the people who express the wish to be rebaptized.

It seems in my situation the people who have come for re-baptism have been influenced by the following streams of thought. First, there is the influence of individualism, which has become a way of life for most Americans. Daniel Stevick, in his commentary on Prayer Book Studies 26, writes:

The most common rationale now given seems to be that infant Baptism witnesses to God's initiative. In the individualism of the modern world and of American society, many adults ask how much they can honestly promise in the name of an infant in so personal a matter as ultimate religious faith and loyalty. Increasingly, there are indications that young persons, for their part, question the extent to which they are bound by solemn commitments that were made in their name without their consent.⁶

The modern emphasis on "doing his own thing", certainly leaves little room for the concepts of the objective initiative of God and the

⁶Daniel Stevick, Supplement to Prayer Book Studies 26, (New York: Church Hymnal, 1973), p. 43.

communal concept of the church as family. Each individual wants all control over his/her life, without anyone else making any decision for him/her. This prevailing thought in America has led young people to say, "Let me make up my own life," and "Mother, please, I'd rather do it myself." Therefore, it is of no little surprise that some young people are offended by baptismal commitments made for them by their parents at an earlier age, and they want to do it for themselves. Therefore, they come to the church wanting to be rebaptized, because now, "I want to do it."

A second reason given by people for rebaptism in our situation has been that they have drifted away from the life of the Christian Church for some reason or another, have decided to return to the full life of Word and Sacraments, and therefore, want a rite to initiate them back into the new life. The rite that did that for them the first time was baptism, and so rebaptism seems logical for the second time. They have truly realized that by their lifestyles in the past they have not been plugged into the power available to them in their baptism. They want to be plugged in again to that situation. There is an inner need for a demonstrable symbol to help them realize this.

A third reason given by people for rebaptism is that they have made a great growth-step in their faith, or had a unique experience that made them grow in their faith, and they want to celebrate that movement in their faith with a worship service of some type; the only one they remember that is close to that theologically is baptism, and so they want to be rebaptized. It is not a time of repentance from a lifestyle of unbelief to one of belief, but a time of celebration of a

continued growth in their belief of God.

A fourth reason given by people for rebaptism has been the influence of the "Charismatic movement" in the church. It is not so much their excitement of being in the renewed power of the Holy Spirit that prompts this asking for rebaptism, but rather a feeling of incompleteness in the movement because of their infant baptism, rather than "believer's baptism." The opening up to the gifts of Spirit seems to need a ritual of approval, and again the only one seemingly right would be rebaptism,

It seems to me that the people coming and asking for rebaptism have some positive reasons (celebration of a growth step), and untheological reasons (individualism versus community rights). Whatever the reasons, the people who come to the church for rebaptism have a need, a need to concretize a feeling or happening in their life with a demonstrable act or ritual. The people are asking for a tangible symbol for their intangible feelings of their relationship with God. As a pastor I feel it my responsibility to help them celebrate this movement, but in a manner that is responsible to the Biblical, historical, and theological issues involved. Referring back to the questionnaire given the congregation, especially questions 15 - 18 which deal with rebaptism, I was given more input into the situation. My evaluation of this questionnaire would bring forth these ideas: Rebaptism itself has not been a big issue at all with our membership, and the wish for rebaptism has been greater than the practice. It is interesting that the youngest grouping had the least amount of desire for rebaptism. A small but important number of people would have

wished for adult baptism, emphasizing their wish for choice in the matter. A large number of people would wish for a service of affirmation of their baptismal covenant, especially in the two older groupings. I would guess that the reasons would be because of growth steps in the faith, and for some a return to the faith after a period of inactivity. On the whole there seems to be a need for a symbolic act of worship to affirm again the baptismal covenant.

After this questionnaire had confirmed my private feelings of a need for some type of meaningful worship event to take the place of rebaptism, and I was beginning to work on such a service, the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship has written a provisional service for the Affirmation of the Baptismal Covenant. The rite is written to be used in the following situations: a) Those baptized as infants or young children who have been through the confirmational education of the church and wish to make a public confession of their faith and commit themselves to the life and mission of the church in a more responsible way (confirmation); b) Those who are coming into the membership of the congregation from another church body, another Lutheran congregation through instruction, or letter of transfer; c) Those who desire once again to participate actively in the life of the church after having neglected, abandoned, or lapsed from it; d) Those who desire to renew their commitment to the life and mission of the church as a result of new insight or experience.⁷ The Service

⁷Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, Affirmation of the Baptismal Covenant, (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975), p. 15.

of Affirmation is flexible enough to involve all of these cases. It is also an excellent opportunity for the congregation of baptized believers to be reminded of their covenant of baptism. Daniel Stevick in his Supplement to the Episcopal Liturgical Commission's Prayer Book Studies 26, makes this observation:

Here the already baptized community makes its own promises of the one baptized. It is reminded of the gift in which its own life is constituted in a deep identification, another's "no" to sin and "yes" to God is said again for oneself. One's own past and future are made present.⁸

A service of Affirmation of Baptismal Vows would then be beneficial in many ways for the whole congregation. This type of service could be done at various intervals in the church year depending upon the needs of the congregation.

Following is a side-by-side comparison of the two rites of Affirmation of the Baptismal Covenant of the Episcopal and Lutheran Churches. The rite on the left of each page is the Episcopalian, and the one on the right is the Lutheran.

⁸Stevick, op. cit., p. 91.

At the principal service on a Sunday or other Feast, the Collect and Lessons are properly those of the Day. On other occasions, the following are used:

Almighty God, grant that we who have turned from the old life of sin by our Baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, may be renewed in your Holy Spirit, and live in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who now lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

| Lesson | Epistle | Gospel |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Jeremiah 31:31-34 | Ephesians 4:7, 11-16 | John 14:15-21 |

THE SERMON

Profession of Faith and Commitment

After the Sermon, those who desire to make a special Affirmation of their Baptismal Vows, and have been duly prepared, take their places before the Bishop, together with those who are to present them.

The Presenters address the Bishop,

Father in God, I present to you these persons for blessing by the laying-on of hands.

The Bishop says to those presented,

Do you desire to make your Profession of Faith in the words of the Church's baptismal Creed?

Answer. I do.

The Bishop then says to the congregation,

Dear friends, let us all join with these persons in renewing our own baptismal covenant.

Bishop. Do you believe in God the Father?

People. I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

OR
D These persons desire to make public affirmation of their baptismal covenant as a sign of their renewed participation in the life and work of the church of Christ.

Their names are read.

☐ Dear friends, we rejoice that you have returned home to the household of God, and that you now desire to make public profession of your faith and to claim again the eternal inheritance which is your birthright in Holy Baptism.

OR

D These persons desire to make public affirmation of their baptismal covenant.

Their names are read.

☐ Dear friends, we rejoice that you desire to profess your faith and to renew your commitment to the life and mission of the church.

The presiding minister addresses all those who have been presented.

☐ Brothers and sisters in Christ: In Holy Baptism our Lord Jesus Christ received you and made you members of his church. You have shared our life together. From God's Word you have learned his loving purpose for you and for all of his creation. *You have been nourished at his holy table.*

☐ Now, therefore, I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the Church, the faith in which we baptize.

STAND

☐ Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises?

☒ I do.

Bishop. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

People. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Bishop. Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

People. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Bishop. Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers?

People. I will, with God's help.

Bishop. Will you by word and example proclaim the Good News of God in Christ?

People. I will, with God's help.

Bishop. Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

People. I will, with God's help.

Bishop. Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

People. I will, with God's help.

[P] Do you believe in God the Father?

[R] I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

[P] Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

[R] I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

[P] Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

[R] I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

[A] Let us pray for those who are affirming the covenant
their Baptism, and for all the baptized everywhere.

That they may be redeemed from all evil and rescued from
the way of sin and death. Lord, in your mercy,

[Q] Hear our prayer.

A That the Holy Spirit may open their hearts to your grace and truth. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

A That they may be kept in the faith and communion of your holy Church. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

A That they may be sent into the world in witness to your love. Lord, in your mercy.

C Hear our prayer.

A That they may be brought to the fullness of your peace and glory. Lord, in your mercy,

C Hear our prayer.

Other prayers may be added.

P Into your hands, Father, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

Dedication to Mission

Then the Bishop addresses those who have been presented for the laying-on of hands:

You have joined with us in renewing the covenant of Baptism. You have recognized that Christ has called his people to be his ambassadors in the world. Do you here renew your individual commitment to proclaim by word and deed his message of reconciliation, hope, and love?

Answer. I do. With God's help, I will follow Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord, and I will work and pray and give for the spread of his kingdom.

The Bishop says this Prayer over the entire group to be blessed:

Almighty God, we thank you that by the Cross of your Son Jesus Christ you have overcome sin and brought us to yourself, and by the sealing of your Holy Spirit have bound us to your service. Renew in these your servants the covenant you made with them and all your people, and send them in the power of that Spirit to perform the tasks you set for them.

The Bishop lays his hand on the head of each person and continues,

Strengthen your servant, Name, with the riches of your Holy Spirit; sustain him and empower him for your service.

When all have been commissioned, the Bishop continues, saying,

Defend, O Lord, these your servants with your heavenly grace that they may continue yours for ever; and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more, until they come to your everlasting kingdom.

The People respond to the Bishop's Prayer, saying,
Amen.

*The Bishop and People exchange the Peace.*⁹

The minister addresses those making affirmation.

[P] You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in Holy Baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,
to hear his Word and share in his Supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ
through word and deed,
to see Christ and serve him in all people,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

Each person answers individually.

[R] I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

[P] Let us pray.

Those making affirmation kneel. A brief silence is kept so that personal prayer may be made for them.

[P] Heavenly Father, through water and the Spirit you have made these men and women your own. You forgave them all their sins and brought them to newness of life. Continue to strengthen them with the Holy Spirit and daily increase in them your gifts of grace: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and power, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, and the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

[C] Amen.

The presiding minister lays both hands on the head of each person.

[P] *(Name)*, the Father in heaven, for Jesus' sake, strengthen in you the gift of the Holy Spirit, to deepen your faith, to direct your life, to empower you for service, to give you patience in suffering, and to bring you to everlasting life.

Each person answers individually.

[R] Amen.

They stand. The presiding minister addresses them in these or similar words:

[P] We rejoice that you have affirmed the covenant of your Baptism. Live in it joyfully.

The presiding minister extends to each of them the sign of the peace of the Lord. They give the sign of peace to one another and to other members of the congregation using these or similar words:

The peace of the Lord.

[R] His peace be with you.

All return to their places, and the service continues with the Offering and Preface.

10

⁹Daniel Stevick, Holy Baptism, of Prayer Book Studies 26, (New York: Church Hymnal, 1973) pp. 24-26.

¹⁰Inter Lutheran Commission on Worship, pp. 21-25.

In comparing the two liturgies one can first note the great similarities in them. The form is the same, with a time for questioning of faith, a time for profession of faith, a time for commitment to mission, and a time for the laying on of hands and prayer. They both make use of laypersons to introduce the interested people and welcome them into the family of the church. In the confession of faith the Lutheran liturgy asks the additional question of renouncing the forces of evil. They both then ask the traditional three-fold statement of faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed. The Episcopal rite then continues with the question/answer formula dealing with living the Christian lifestyle. The Lutheran liturgy covers the same ground but in prayer form. The emphasis in the Episcopal rite is on one's relationships to neighbor and humankind. The Lutheran emphasis is more on the relationship of the person to God. There is then a similar question of the participants as to their continuing in the baptismal covenant, and what that can mean for their lives. The response for the Episcopal rite is longer and more specific. Following this is the prayer for the people involved, asking the Holy Spirit's power to be involved. The key word in the Episcopal rite is "renew", while in the Lutheran rite it is "continue" and "increase". Both rites then make use of the historical symbolism of the laying on of hands, using the name of the person, and a prayer to the Holy Spirit for power, guidance, and encouragement for the rest of their lives. The Peace is then exchanged to conclude the rite.

I will use the Lutheran service of Affirmation of the Baptismal Covenant. I would think it would be more meaningful by the

addition of the questions in the Episcopal rite following the three basic questions in the words of the Apostles' Creed. These are the four additional questions found on page 25 of the Episcopal rite. It also seems to me that additional symbolism would make this rite more meaningful for the participants. I think this is one of the concepts the people are yearning for, a tangible expression of their intangible movement towards God. One possibility would be the use of the drink made up of milk and honey. There is great symbolism out of the Old Testament as the people of God moved from slavery to their new promised land, they celebrated it as a land of milk and honey. Ancient baptismal rites many times used the drink of milk and honey to celebrate this movement. It seems quite appropriate in this instance as well. I also think a gift from the church family would be most beneficial. This could either be a cross of Jesus Christ to be worn or a copy of the Bible to be used in worship, devotions, and education.

Chapter XI

SUMMARY

Summary - 1

Baptism is a doctrine of the Lutheran Church that is rich in its history and theology. There is much to be relearned from the past studies of baptism. Baptism is also a part of the life of the Christian Church that has a most exciting future. In bringing back this sacrament to its central place in the life and faith of the people of God, the church will be revitalized. The future holds many exciting possibilities of making baptism even more relevant in the daily lives of people than ever before. The infinite amount of materials that we now possess as a church will help us to make baptism a more celebrative event for the person baptized and for the congregation that renews its own baptismal covenants with God at each event of baptism.

Hopefully this study on baptism done by the Pastor and members of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, La Puente, California, will give impetus to other congregations to revitalize the event and theology of baptism in their local churches. I would like to thank Mount Calvary Lutheran Church for not only encouraging me to work with them on this parish-project, but for allowing me to experiment with various worship experiences. Their openness to change and try new things has allowed me to risk making mistakes, and in the process to create new and meaningful worship events and educational tools, not only for our own congregation, but for the Lutheran Church. I would also like to thank

them for the financial support for this project and the Doctor of Ministry degree. It is a unique project and degree that belongs to both Pastor and congregation. May we do other projects together in the future.

I would also like to thank my wife, Edel, and my two children, Tim and Mark, for helping me to celebrate baptism as a daily event of repentance, acceptance, love, joy, and peace. Their patience and encouragement on this project have been the inspiration to complete this project,

I would especially like to give God glory, praise and thanks, for making me his child on December 13, 1942, my baptismal day; and every day thereafter.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

TABULATION OF BAPTISM QUESTIONNAIRE - April 27, 1975

My Baptism

1. Knowledge of their birthday.

| | Yes | No |
|--------|-----------|----------|
| 0-18 | 27 | 0 |
| 19-34 | 22 | 0 |
| 35-99 | <u>40</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Totals | 89 | 0 |

2. Knowledge of their baptismal day.

| | Day/Month/Yr. | Month/Yr. | Yr. | Did not know |
|--------|---------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| 0-18 | 10 | 0 | 4 | 13 |
| 19-34 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| 35-99 | <u>12</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>16</u> |
| Totals | 32 | 2 | 17 | 38 |

3. Knowledge of the name of the church baptized in.

| | Yes | No | Lutheran | Other |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 0-18 | 23 | 4 | 22 | 1 |
| 19-34 | 13 | 9 | 11 | 2 |
| 35-99 | <u>30</u> | <u>10</u> | <u>25</u> | <u>5</u> |
| Totals | 66 | 23 | 58 | 8 |

Roman Catholic - 1
 Presbyterian - 2
 Methodist - 2
 Congreg. - 1

4. Knowledge of sponsors?

| | Zero | One | Two | More | Did not know |
|--------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| 0-18 | 1 | 2 | 15 | 2 | 7 |
| 19-34 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 1 | 5 |
| 35-99 | <u>15</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>10</u> |
| Totals | 19 | 9 | 31 | 8 | 22 |

5. Knowledge of celebration of anniversary of their baptism?

| | Yes | No |
|--------|----------|-----------|
| 0-18 | 0 | 27 |
| 19-34 | 1 | 21 |
| 35-99 | <u>2</u> | <u>38</u> |
| Totals | 3 | 85 |

6. Still possess mementoes of their baptism?

| | Dress | Certificate | Napkin | Candle | Other |
|--------|----------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|
| 0-18 | 7 | 21 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| 19-34 | 1 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 35-99 | <u>0</u> | <u>19</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Totals | 8 | 55 | 7 | 3 | 3 |

7. Do your sponsors keep in touch with you?

| | Cards | Presents | At confirm- ation | Visits | Other | Yes | No |
|--------|----------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 0-18 | 13 | 12 | 6 | 15 | 3 | 24 | 3 |
| 19-34 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 11 | 11 |
| 35-99 | <u>6</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>10</u> | <u>30</u> |
| Totals | 26 | 19 | 12 | 22 | 6 | 45 | 44 |

8. Were you baptized as an adult?

| | Yes | No | If so, length of class | |
|--------|-----------|-----------|------------------------|---------|
| 0-18 | 1 | 26 | 6 weeks | |
| 19-34 | 2 | 20 | | |
| 35-99 | <u>12</u> | <u>28</u> | 6 weeks | 8 weeks |
| Totals | 15 | 74 | | |

EDUCATION

1. Did you attend Sunday School education for youth?

| | Yes | No | Length of years | | | | |
|--------|-----------|----------|----------------------|------|------|------|----------|
| 0-18 | 24 | 3 | 9 years | | | | |
| 19-34 | 19 | 3 | 4 years- 2 12-4 15-5 | | | | |
| 35-99 | <u>36</u> | <u>4</u> | 1-1 | 3-1 | 4-1 | 7-1 | 8-3 10-1 |
| | | | 12-2 | 14-1 | 15-1 | 18-1 | 19-1 |
| Totals | 79 | 10 | 20-1 | 21-1 | | | |

2. Did you attend Confirmation education?

| | Yes | No | Length of years | Years in School |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 0-18 | 13 | 14 | 2 years - 10 | 7 & 8 - 7 |
| 19-34 | 22 | 0 | 2 years - 10 | 7&8-10 8&9-7 |
| 35-99 | <u>26</u> | <u>14</u> | 1 year-9 2-4 6 weeks - 2 | 7&8-4 9&10-3 |
| Totals | 61 | 28 | | |

3. Did you attend High School education?

| | Yes | No | Length of years | | | |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|
| 0-18 | 15 | 12 | 1-3 | 2-2 | 3-5 | 4-5 |
| 19-34 | 16 | 6 | 1 year - 5 | 2-2 | 3-4 | 4-5 |
| 35-99 | <u>17</u> | <u>23</u> | 1 year - 8 | 2-3 | 3-2 | 4-4 |
| Totals | 48 | 41 | | | | |

4. Did you attend Adult Education?

| | Yes | No | Length of years |
|--------|-----------|-----------|---|
| 0-18 | 0 | 27 | 0 |
| 19-34 | 10 | 12 | 1 year - 1 2-5 |
| 35-99 | <u>27</u> | <u>13</u> | 1 year -2 2-1 4-1 5-1 10-1 20-1 36-1 |
| Totals | 37 | 52 | |

SPONSORSHIP OF OTHERS

1. Are you a sponsor of any baptized person?

| | Yes | No | How many? |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|
| 0-18 | 2 | 25 | 1 - 2 |
| 19-34 | 9 | 13 | 1 child - 2 2-2 3-3 4-2 |
| 35-99 | <u>24</u> | <u>16</u> | 1 child - 2 2-2 4-1 5-1 |
| Totals | 35 | 54 | |

2. Do you keep in touch with child you sponsored?

| | Yes | No | By cards | by presents | At confirm- ation | Visits |
|--------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 0-18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19-34 | 9 | 0 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 4 |
| 35-99 | <u>21</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>9</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>14</u> |
| Totals | 30 | 3 | 20 | 15 | 5 | 18 |

3. When does responsibility end for Sponsorship?

| | At Baptism | At Confirm- ation | At death of person | Never | No Answer |
|--------|------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 0-18 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 16 | 5 |
| 19-34 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 14 | 1 |
| 35-99 | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>20</u> | <u>15</u> |
| Totals | 0 | 1 | 12 | 50 | 21 |

4. Rank importance of responsibilities of sponsors.

| | First | Second | Third | Fourth | No Answer |
|-----------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-----------|
| 0-18 Witness | 3 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 13 |
| Pray for | 3 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 10 |
| Help celebrate | 9 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| Sure to educate | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 25 |
| 19-34 Witness | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 2 |
| Pray for | 8 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Help celebrate | 2 | 3 | 10 | 7 | 0 |
| Sure to educate | 10 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| 35-99 Witness | 10 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 12 |
| Pray for | 12 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 8 |
| Help celebrate | 3 | 2 | 7 | 13 | 15 |
| Sure to educate | 12 | 13 | 4 | 1 | 10 |

THEOLOGY OF BAPTISM

1. What is the common, basic earthly element used in baptism?

| | Water | Other | Did not know |
|-------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| 0-18 | 16 | 7 | 4 |
| 19-34 | 22 | 0 | 0 |
| 35-99 | <u>33</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>6</u> |
| Total | 71 | 8 | 10 |

2. What is the Word, the Scripture passage used in baptism?

| | Matthew 28 | Other | Did not know |
|-------|------------|----------|--------------|
| 0-18 | 8 | 6 | 13 |
| 19-34 | 2 | 1 | 19 |
| 35-99 | <u>9</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>27</u> |
| Total | 19 | 11 | 59 |

3. Which is the most valid method of baptism?

| | Sprinkling | Pouring | Total Immersion | Any of three | Other |
|-------|------------|----------|-----------------|--------------|-------|
| 0-18 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 12 | |
| 19-34 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 17 | |
| 35-99 | <u>6</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>22</u> | |
| Total | 34 | 1 | 3 | 51 | |

4. What two relationships are given to the person at their baptism?

| | One correct | Two Correct | Zero correct | Other |
|-------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------|
| 0-18 | 6 | 4 | 17 | |
| 19-34 | 6 | 15 | 1 | |
| 35-99 | <u>18</u> | <u>17</u> | <u>5</u> | |
| Total | 30 | 36 | 23 | |

5. What three gifts are given to the person at baptism from God?

| | One correct | Two correct | Three correct | Zero correct | Other |
|-------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| 0-18 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 17 | |
| 19-34 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 5 | |
| 35-99 | <u>7</u> | <u>9</u> | <u>7</u> | <u>17</u> | |
| Total | 16 | 16 | 18 | 39 | |

6. Who chooses who in baptism?

| | God chooses us | We choose God |
|-------|----------------|---------------|
| 0-18 | 16 | 12 |
| 19-34 | 16 | 6 |
| 35-99 | <u>27</u> | <u>13</u> |
| Total | 59 | 31 |

7. Whose faith is critical to receive this gift of grace?

| | Baptized | Parents | Sponsors | Pastors | Total church | Nothing |
|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|----------|
| 0-18 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 12 |
| 19-34 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 3 |
| 35-99 | <u>8</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>20</u> | <u>5</u> |
| Total | 15 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 44 | 20 |

8. Where is the best place in church for baptismal font?

| | Altar area | Entrance to church | On side of front | Center front |
|-------|------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 0-18 | 4 | 0 | 20 | 3 |
| 19-34 | 6 | 0 | 12 | 4 |
| 35-99 | <u>12</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>22</u> | <u>5</u> |
| Total | 22 | 1 | 54 | 12 |

9. What happens to a child who dies before being baptized?

| | Goes to hell | Goes to heaven | Goes to limbo | God is love |
|-------|--------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| 0-18 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 19 |
| 19-34 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 18 |
| 35-99 | <u>0</u> | <u>14</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>26</u> |
| Total | 1 | 24 | 1 | 63 |

10. Is adult baptism (believer's more valid than infant baptism?

| | Yes | No |
|-------|----------|-----------|
| 0-18 | 2 | 25 |
| 19-34 | 2 | 20 |
| 35-99 | <u>4</u> | <u>36</u> |
| Total | 8 | 81 |

11. Have you ever baptized anyone?

| | Yes | No | If yes, circumstances | |
|-------|-----|----|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 0-18 | 0 | 27 | | |
| 19-34 | 0 | 22 | | |
| 35-99 | 3 | 37 | In military - 1 | In hospital - 2 |

12. How often do you think about the fact of your baptism?

| | Daily | Weekly | Yearly | Don't think about it |
|-------|----------|----------|-----------|----------------------|
| 0-18 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 5 |
| 19-34 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 10 |
| 35-99 | <u>7</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>11</u> | <u>16</u> |
| Total | 20 | 14 | 24 | 31 |

13. Should at least one of the parents belong to the church before baptism of children?

| | Yes | No |
|-------|-----------|-----------|
| 0-18 | 14 | 13 |
| 19-34 | 7 | 15 |
| 35-99 | <u>19</u> | <u>21</u> |
| Total | 40 | 49 |

14. Should private baptisms be allowed, if no emergency?

| | Yes | No | If yes, in what circumstances |
|-------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 0-18 | 13 | 14 | If parents want it that way - 1 |
| 19-34 | 10 | 12 | At time of death - 1 |
| 35-99 | <u>20</u> | <u>20</u> | When desired - 2 |
| Total | 43 | 46 | |

15. Have you ever been rebaptized?

| | Yes | No | If yes, by what church? |
|-------|----------|-----------|-------------------------|
| 0-18 | 0 | 27 | |
| 19-34 | 0 | 22 | |
| 35-99 | <u>2</u> | <u>38</u> | Baptist church - 2 |
| Total | 2 | 87 | |

16. Have you ever wished to be rebaptized?

| | Yes | No |
|-------|----------|-----------|
| 0-18 | 1 | 26 |
| 19-34 | 3 | 19 |
| 35-99 | <u>4</u> | <u>36</u> |
| Total | 8 | 81 |

17. If you had to do it over again, would you wait until adulthood to be baptized?

| | Yes | No | If yes, why? |
|-------|----------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| 0-18 | 1 | 26 | Then I could make the choice-1 |
| 19-34 | 2 | 20 | |
| 35-99 | <u>2</u> | <u>38</u> | |
| Total | 5 | 84 | |

18. Do you wish for a worship service of rededication, so that at key Spiritual moments in life you could celebrate them in symbolic way?

| | Yes | No |
|-------|-----------|-----------|
| 0-18 | 2 | 25 |
| 19-34 | 17 | 5 |
| 35-99 | <u>27</u> | <u>13</u> |
| Total | 46 | 43 |

19. Have you been to New Baptismal service used in church?

| | Yes | No | Likes | Dislikes |
|-------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 0-18 | 18 | 9 | New - 1 | |
| 19-34 | 15 | 7 | Words-1 | Use older hymns-1 |
| 35-99 | <u>20</u> | <u>20</u> | Total involvement-3 | |
| | | | More joyful - 4 | |
| Total | 53 | 36 | | |

20. What things would you like to see done to improve the Sacrament of Baptism?

| | |
|-------|--|
| 0-18 | No comments |
| 19-34 | No comments |
| 35-99 | More involvement of congregation - 1 More use of laypeople in baptismal service - 1 |

APPENDIX B

1526 Taufbuechlein

The Order of Baptism Newly Revised

The officiant shall say:

Depart thou unclean spirit and make room for the Holy Spirit.

*Then he shall sign him with a cross on
his forehead and breast and shall say:*

Receive the sign of the holy cross on both thy forehead and thy breast.

Let us pray.

O Almighty eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I cry to thee for this N., thy servant, who prays for the gift of thy baptism and desires thine eternal grace through spiritual regeneration: Receive him, Lord, and as thou hast said, "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you," so give now the good to him that asketh and open the door to him that knocketh: so that

he may obtain the eternal blessing of this heavenly bath and receive the promised kingdom of thy grace; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us pray.

Almighty eternal God, who according to thy righteous judgment didst condemn the unbelieving world through the flood and in thy great mercy didst preserve believing Noah and his family, and who didst drown hardhearted Pharaoh with all his host in the Red Sea and didst lead thy people Israel through the same on dry ground, thereby prefiguring this bath of thy baptism, and who through the baptism of thy dear Child, our Lord Jesus Christ, hast consecrated and set apart the Jordan and all water as a salutary flood and a rich and full washing away of sins: We pray through the same thy groundless mercy that thou wilt graciously behold this N. and bless him with true faith in the spirit so that by means of this saving flood all that has been born in him from Adam and which he himself has added thereto may be drowned in him and engulfed, and that he may be sundered from the number of the unbelieving, preserved dry and secure in the holy ark of Christendom, serve thy name at all times fervent in spirit and joyful in hope, so that with all believers he may be made worthy to attain eternal life according to thy promise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I adjure thee, thou unclean spirit, by the name of the Father ✠ and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Ghost ✠ that thou come out of and depart from this servant of Jesus Christ, N. Amen.

Let us hear the holy gospel of St. Mark 7:10-13-16.

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Then the priest shall lay his hands on the head of the child and pray the Our Father together with the sponsors kneeling.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

*Thereupon the little child shall be brought to the font, and
the priest shall say:*

The Lord preserve thy coming in and going out now and
for evermore.

*Then the priest shall have the child, through his sponsors,
renounce the devil and say:*

N., dost thou renounce the devil?

Response: Yes.

And all his works?

Response: Yes.

And all his ways?

Response: Yes.

Then he shall ask:

Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of
heaven and earth?

Response: Yes.

Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord,
who was born and suffered?

Response: Yes.

Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Christian
church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the
resurrection of the body, and after death an eternal life?

Response: Yes.

Dost thou desire to be baptized?

Response: Yes.

Then shall he take the child, dip it in the font, and say:

And I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the
Son and of the Holy Ghost.

*Then the sponsors shall hold the little child in the font, and
the priest shall say, while he puts the christening robe on the child:*

The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who
hath regenerated thee through water and the Holy Ghost and
hath forgiven thee all thy sin, strengthen thee with his grace
to life everlasting. Amen.

Peace be with thee.

Answer: Amen.